

FORTY-EIGHT YEARS AGO

INTERESTING REMINISCENCES OF EARLY PIONEER DAYS.

Easy-Going Methods of Those Times, That Have Gone Now, Never to Return.

We reached the falls of the Columbia on the 8th day of September, 1852, being the 126th day after we left the Missouri River. In my "mess" we were down to coffee and beans straight, and had been for three days. But luckily we found there a small store kept in a tent by Allen & McKinley, of Oregon City. Mr. McKinley himself in charge, who we laid in supplies for us through the mountains. We paid \$4 for 50 pounds of flour, \$2 for a peck of potatoes, \$1 for a quart of common molasses, 5 cents a pound for brown sugar, and 30 cents a pound for fresh beef. There were no people but Indians and a few United States soldiers living in the vicinity of The Dalles.

After remaining there half a day we started south to take the Barlow Road over the Cascade Mountains. The first night we camped in a narrow, deep valley, with high hills and cliffs on either side. That night we were suddenly aroused by the fierce yell of the cougar, which seemed to be so uncomfortably near that all of the men flew to arms on the double-quick, as we did not know what it was. The next day we reached the Barlow Road and all agreed that it was the roughest and worst road they had ever traveled. It was but little wider than a wagon, and ran through dense woods thickly entangled with brush and old logs. Before we could pass over many of the stumps we had to pile up rocks or chunks on either side of them, so as to raise the wheels high enough to allow the axle to pass over. But we had traveled so many months over the treacherous plains, exposed to the scorching sun, trudging through clouds of suffocating dust, and seldom getting a glimpse of anything green, that we were so delighted with the change, we had little time to complain of the road. It was so refreshing to breathe the sweet breath of a fir forest and walk beneath its shades and behold the amazing growth of timber and brush, that we had never thought the forests of Ohio were grand, but here I saw more timber on one acre than I had ever seen on four.

When we reached Summit Prairie, three or four miles south of Mount Hood, we camped a day to give our oxen rest and a chance to pick some grass. The ground old mountain was in full view and seemed almost near enough to touch, but we were too much jaded to attempt to climb to its crest. We were much deceived as well as amused by a mistake we made on a chunk of dark green, rather coarse grass, which we put into the wagon for feed. At the next encampment we gave some of it to the oxen, but they would not touch it, though they ate heartily of the examination we found it had a strong alkali taste, and afterwards learned that it was called "soap grass."

I do not intend to describe our descent of "Laurel Hill" except to say that our wagon did not contain 150 pounds of freight. We "rough-locked" all the wheels with log chains, each of these so tightly fastened that they could not turn. When the wagon moved it had to slide with those chains digging into the hard ground. We put the strongest yoke of oxen on the front, and we pulled with all they could, yet it required our very best efforts to get the wagon down safely. Laurel Hill was no "short patch." It was many hundreds of yards from top to bottom, perfectly straight, and the grade must have been about 45 degrees. At our "halt" encampment in the mountains we were again fooled by a patch of very green vegetation on a distant hillside to which, with great difficulty, we drove our half-starved oxen. It was the common fern, so abundant all over western Oregon, but we had never seen it. Most of the people then called it "Fer-rem." But the oxen would not eat it.

We reached Philip Foster's, the first house in Oregon, on the 15th day of September, and the 134th day from our departure from the Missouri River, near St. Joseph. Though we had been traveling several weeks in Oregon, we did not realize that we were there until we found the first house. We halted at Foster's three or four days to rest our teams. Having ordered my letters to be sent to Oregon City, I, with another of our party, set out on foot for that place 15 miles distant. When we reached the Clackamas River, finding no ferry or bridge, we had to take off most of our clothes and wade across. The river was alive with great salmon, all swimming up stream with all their might, many of them bumping against our feet and legs in their haste to get to the falls. I had never before seen, or even dreamed of. After crossing the river we stopped at the farmhouse of an old couple by the name of Arthour, and asked for dinner, which the good lady soon prepared for us. While dinner was being made I sauntered about the place and found a young apple orchard just coming into bearing. Being curious to know how Oregon apples tasted, I picked one here and there and, if the taste did not suit, threw it away as recklessly as I would have done at home, where they were worth only 75 cents a bushel. I had never when I learned that those same apples were worth 25 to 30 cents a piece, I felt like an unpunished criminal. I felt doubly guilty in this case, because the good old lady had charged us only 20 cents each for our dinner, when I had to pay 75 cents at every other farmhouse, and a dollar in the towns wherever I stopped after that. Apples were gold in Oregon. Small seedling apples sold for \$1 a bushel on the trees, the buyer having to pick, box and haul them to the steamboat landings for shipment to San Francisco. Good, grafted fruit was worth much more.

only got \$5 to \$8 per month, with board, while here in Oregon they got \$2 to \$3 per day with board. It seemed very strange to see so much gold in the hands of the people, and how lavish many of them were with it. The practice of coin in circulation was a 50 piece, made in San Francisco, of pure gold, and called "slugs." There were also some of the "beaver" 50 gold pieces in circulation. They were made at Oregon City. These slugs were octagonal in shape and passed as currently as United States gold coin. In the "States" there was no gold in circulation; it was all paper money, with a small quantity of silver. The people seldom, if ever, saw a gold coin.

I saw but one plow going that Fall in the Willamette valley, and that was the hands of Mr. Orubba, who crossed the plains in the same company that I came with. He had taken up a "claim" near Corvallis, and was breaking new land. I saw but one small piece of Fall-sown wheat, and that was on Shannon's place, in the northeast corner of Howell prairie.

It did not take me long to see why there was so much gold in Oregon. I soon learned that nearly all of the men had been to the mines in California and each had returned with his pile. Those who did not go were able to sell everything they owned at such enormous prices as to give them plenty; all felt so rich that work seemed unnecessary. Oregon did not then, nor for many years later, produce breadstuffs for her own population. More or less flour was imported from Chile, and corn meal from the States, as late as 1860. I was amazed to see so little land in cultivation. There was not one acre in 100 in the Willamette valley under fence, but very little of it was under fence. Millions of acres of these prairies of unsurpassed fertility were inviting the plow, and the markets were bidding so high for their products that my bill for wheat went up to \$5 per bushel; corn to \$2 per barrel; oats to \$2 to \$3; potatoes to \$1 per bushel, and meat proportionately high. Butter sold at \$1 a pound, and in the northern part of the state it did not get below 15 cents a pound for many years. Now we think it a great hardship to pay 30 cents for better butter than was ever found here in those days. Poultry and eggs were worth three or four times as much as they are at present, while fruit was gold itself. That Winter I saw barrels of pork and piles of hams from Cincinnati, O., via Cape Horn. Yet such demands, such astounding prices, did not produce any activity in the raising of such articles, and the result was a few of them seized that golden opportunity and made money, but too many rested until their gold was all gone, until they were too old, or too delicate, to be able to do anything. Many of those who returned from California with fortunes died poor. I am of the opinion that the gold mines of California did Oregonians more harm than it did permanent good.

Most of the houses in Oregon were very poor, generally small log cabins. The barns and outbuildings were few and small, yet the people seemed well satisfied. It was bewildering to see them so ignorant of the possibilities of the splendid chances to increase their fortunes. That Winter I taught a country school in Marion County, and where I boarded the only meat we ever had was venison. We had it three months, and the people identified it with Winter that one could almost knock them down with a stick. As I mention that school, I may as well say that in order to get the school I had to help build three log schoolhouses, and within three days the log schoolhouse was finished, and the Monday following "school took up." That was my first, last and only experience in teaching. I have finished-looked on the Mississippi River, done all kinds of farm work, cut, rafted and floated sawlogs to the mill on the stormy waters of Clatsop County, searched for and dug gold in the wildest mountains of Idaho; but all of these were but pleasant pastimes compared to teaching a country school in a log cabin. But I suppose I should be proud that I did not teach in vain. One of my pupils became a high Sheriff of Marion County and another furnished Portland with her largest policeman, William Heintze, who could "tip the beam" at 400 pounds.

The dress of the old Oregonian was peculiar. The men all wore black, broad-brimmed, soft hats, and long hair combed back behind their ears, covering the neck. Few of the young men wore coats, except in very inclement weather or on dress occasions. They dressed in blue or gray overalls with necktie, the long ends of which were artistically tucked in the open shirt front between the lower buttons. None of them had suspenders, but instead wore a red silk knit or netted sash around the waist, tied in a bow above the right hip, the long fringed ends hanging down to or near the knee. The overalls were drawn up a little so as to lap or flow over the waistband. The young men all had Indian horses and used the old Mexican saddle with its high, strong horn, broad, heavy mochillas, commonly called "mochures" large, wooden stirrups covered with heavy leather tapadores to protect the feet, heavy Rodars to keep the leg from touching the horse's side, and instead of a girth the saddle was fastened on with a strong leather "cinch." This mode of riding was made up of two large pieces of harness leather, ornamented around the border, and fastened together with leather thongs, and made to fit over the horn and tree of the saddle, and extending far enough to the saddle to protect a roll of blankets or other packages from touching the horse. On the horn of the saddle always hung the "lariat," or lasso, and fastened to the rear of the saddletree were long leather straps to lash on such packages as the rider might wish to carry.

They always wore spurs on their heels, seemingly large and fierce enough to disembowel an ordinary Indian pony by one go. In those days an Oregonian thought nothing of riding 30 to 40 miles to see his girl. He always took his blankets, and in case night overtook him he used his lariat to strike out his horse, removed the mochilla from the saddle, which he spread upon the ground, and rolled himself in his blankets and slept until morning. Spare rooms in Oregon houses were generally scarce, and he often had to spread his blankets on the floor or go to the barn to sleep. A mounted Oregonian of the "olden times" presented a queer spectacle, almost bordering on the romantic. He almost always rode in a sweeping gallop, causing the broad brim of his hat to flap up and down with the motion of his horse, his long hair and whiskers blowing in the wind, and the clank of his ponderous Spanish spur, while the long-fringed ends of his red silk sash waved quagga-like as he rode. I had never seen a mounted Oregonian until I had seen that man. I was struck by the beauty of his riding, and the grace of his movements. He was riding at full speed kept their bearded arms waving up and down as if they were wings assisting the pony in his rapid flight. I almost envied them the greatest pleasure they got out of life, and was grateful of their sweet contentment. They were so different from any people that I had ever seen that they were almost as interesting to me as the splendid landscapes, grand mountains, magnificent rivers and peerless climate of beautiful Oregon. Though Oregonians of that day might not have been particularly noted for their industry, enterprise or progressiveness, they were honest, orderly and law-abiding.

I liked Oregon from the first, and was satisfied that it was the best part of the United States that I had ever seen. But I was troubled to know how the people could get along without corn, as I had come from a part of the country where corn was king. I soon learned that corn was not essential where wheat, oats, barley and rye yielded so abundantly. Later on, it was found that corn grew fairly well here. At that time it was believed that the high, rolling lands of the Willamette Valley would not grow wheat, and were only fit for grazing; but ex-

periment proved them to be the best wheat lands, so it was said then and for years later, that wheat could not be grown east of the Cascade Mountains, and that all that vast empire was useless excepting for grazing purposes. Yet that part of the state is annually exporting millions of bushels of wheat.

The oak grub lands, as they are called, from which thousands of cords of good oak wood is cut to supply city, town and farm with fuel, were then but low, bushy thickets, scarcely high enough to hide a deer, having always, until within a few years, been killed down by the Indians. They have grown into trees, and furnish vast quantities of wood.

I visited the Legislative Assembly at Salem in the Winter of 1852 and 1853, which was the first legislative body I ever saw. My high ideas formed in boyish days of noble Senators, grand statesmen, thrilling oratory and capital splendors were not realized. The Legislature met in an old barnlike building near the south end of Commercial street. Fred Wayne, of Polk County; Ben Stark, of Multnomah, and F. A. Chenoweth, of the Cascades, are the only members whose names I remember.

To show how Oregonians did business, and what confidence they had in each other, I will relate one incident: When I closed my school and was ready to go out to locate my "donation claim," I called on a person in the neighborhood to whom I had sold my wagon and some oxen to get the money due me. He said: "I have not that amount of money on hand, but will give you letters to some of my friends from whom I hope you will be able to get your money." He gave me a letter to J. N. Gilbert, who lived in a small log cabin two miles east of Salem, and who was a prominent physician and merchant in Salem, whose name I have forgotten, requesting each to give me the amount of my bill, and charge same to him. Mr. Gilbert being the nearest one, I called on him first, and presented my letter. After reading it, he said: "I do not owe Mr. M. anything, but as I have the money to spare, I will pay your bill, and accommodate both Mr. M. and yourself." My surprise was as great as my delight, because I did not expect to get the money through those letters. The easy-going days of early Oregon are gone, never to return. Perhaps no people ever had such opportunities to make fortunes, improve their farms, homes and their country as had they from 1850 to 1860. During those 30 years a farmer's own labor, if properly managed, should have turned his farm into a mine. Every product of the land then brought three to eight times as much as it does now. But regrets will not bring back lost opportunities.

P. W. GILLETTE, Portland, Dec. 7, 1900.

SUPREME COURT QUESTION.

A Case Where Law and Common Sense Seem to Unite.

FOREST GROVE, Dec. 15.—(To the Editor.)—Among the many articles appearing in your columns during the past few weeks concerning the necessity for relief of the restriction that a naval base should remain in port for minimum periods and spend their time to better advantage on the high seas in case of hostilities. Limited by the restriction that a naval base of operations must be defensible by shore works to insure the mobility of the fleet, Admiral Bradford finds only four ports on the western coast line of the United States adaptable as coaling stations. They are Puget Sound, Columbia River, San Francisco and San Diego. He visited these places, studied the available sites and brought back information of considerable importance on the subject of naval operations in the Pacific, which will depend in large measure on the facility with which fuel can be furnished to ships on that ocean. To this end he proposes to store at San Francisco 150,000 tons, and at Puget Sound, Columbia River and San Diego 25,000 tons each. These storage plants are to be established immediately, and a little later he hopes to provide similar depots at Dutch Harbor, Unalaska and Pichilone, Lower California.

From Washington a month ago the Admiral went direct to Seattle, whence a

shall be handed down as the opinions of the court, while it seems to meet with pretty general favor, is not unopposed altogether probable. The suggestion that some of our present Circuit Judges might be used without any additional expense to the state, is one that will be most apt to commend itself. As has been set forth by Mr. Ford in his communication, time was when the Circuit Judges sitting together constituted the Supreme Court. What is the objection to adding three or four of the present Circuit Judges, to the Supreme Court instead of a commission? Or perhaps they might be created as a separate body, an intermediate court, between the Circuit Courts and the Supreme Court, that might pass finally upon cases of a certain degree. It is a matter of common fame, that there are more Circuit Judges than are required. The first district has two where one would be plenty. The third district has two who could easily carry considerable extra work. The fourth district is not over-crowded; the county of Baker, in Judge Eakin's district, could be added to Judge Clifford's without overworking the latter official, and Union and Wallawa could be added to the sixth district, which now consists only of the counties of Umatilla and Morrow—and then Judge Ellis would not have any more than he could do. By pursuing this policy we should have at least three Circuit Judges who would have four years to serve; one of the Judges of the first district, one of the third and Judge Eakin, who would be without a district. These three Judges, then, might be created a commission, if you like, to sit with the Supreme Court, hear cases, and write opinions, and by the time their terms would expire the docket of the Supreme Court would be clear, and they might be retired, and the state would be out no additional expense for the term or for their services, and from thenceforth save the salaries of three Circuit Judges. Judge Hays, Firm and Eakin, whether serving in the capacity of Commissioners or as an intermediate court, would, from their learning and judicial training, command the respect of the people.

PACIFIC COAST NAVAL BASES

Result of Admiral Bradford's Inspection—Columbia River Station.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 10.—(Special to New York Tribune.)—Rear-Admiral Royal B. Bradford returned to Washington today, after a month's absence on an official tour of inspection of the harbors of the Pacific Coast, with special reference to the necessity of establishing first-class naval coaling stations, with modern automatic appliances, to enable warships to remain in port for minimum periods and spend their time to better advantage on the high seas in case of hostilities. Limited by the restriction that a naval base of operations must be defensible by shore works to insure the mobility of the fleet, Admiral Bradford finds only four ports on the western coast line of the United States adaptable as coaling stations. They are Puget Sound, Columbia River, San Francisco and San Diego. He visited these places, studied the available sites and brought back information of considerable importance on the subject of naval operations in the Pacific, which will depend in large measure on the facility with which fuel can be furnished to ships on that ocean. To this end he proposes to store at San Francisco 150,000 tons, and at Puget Sound, Columbia River and San Diego 25,000 tons each. These storage plants are to be established immediately, and a little later he hopes to provide similar depots at Dutch Harbor, Unalaska and Pichilone, Lower California.

Advertisement for Avenarius Carbolineum. It features a circular logo with a hand holding a pencil, surrounded by text: 'USED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT', 'USED BY THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT', 'AVERNARIUS CARBOLINEUM', 'THE GERMAN WOOD PRESERVER THAT PRESERVES.', 'SOLD ONLY BY FISHER, THORSEN & CO', 'IMPORTERS & SOLE WESTERN AGENTS, PORTLAND, OREGON, U.S.A.', 'IF INTERESTED WRITE FOR CIRCULARS & INFORMATION.', 'BEWARE! "/>

naval tug took him to the naval station at Bremerton, where the Government has the only dock on the Pacific Coast where a battle-ship can be taken out of the water. Here there is a coal hulk with 3000 tons aboard from which ships replenish their bunkers in order to make the run to San Francisco. The place is impregnable to an enemy, and with an increased appropriation over the \$40,000 already available Admiral Bradford expects to establish a pier and steel coal sheds within the next fiscal year. At Tacoma he examined the large coal elevators of the Northern and Southern Pacific Railways, which, while capacious, are not quick enough to fill warships when hostilities demand their presence almost continuously at sea.

On his way to Washington last week Admiral Bradford looked at the New Orleans naval station, where the large floating dock is to be located, and selected a site for a coal depot there.

controlled by the War Department for defenses. This will be utilized as soon as Congress furnishes the money. The location of San Diego is regarded as most important for a naval base. It is near the extreme southern limit of the United States on the coast, and with slight dredging large ships can enter at high tide, while there are good sheltered waters near by where the heaviest ships can safely anchor until the harbor improvements are completed. At the site he selected for the coal depot there is plenty of water for any battle-ship in the Navy.

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A STOREFUL OF CHRISTMAS

Things of quality and usefulness strewn everywhere. Things that men need and appreciate every day of their lives. Things for your boy that will make him happy as long as they last. How easy to find just what will make Christmas happy if you come to the new store, and the quality of a gift will never be questioned, as every one knows this is the one store that does not stoop to inferior goods.

MEN'S SUITS AND OVERCOATS

Our Christmas showing of Men's Clothing is an occasion of irresistible attractiveness, an array of garments that comprises everything that is right and correct in style. Men's Suits in all the new weaves and the very latest colorings. Overcoats in long or short box styles. The Raglan, or English Paddock, with or without velvet collars, and plain or silk lined. The new "Cravenette" Rain-Proof Coat with padded shoulders is one of our latest novelties.

Suits and Overcoats guaranteed to fit perfectly at from \$10 to \$30. Should you guess the wrong size of anything bought for a present, or for any other reason, you wish to exchange the purchase after Christmas, remember we are here to please you.

Smoking Jackets...

Whether your husband smokes or not, a Smoking-Jacket is as indispensable to him as a house-wraper is for a woman. Our variety of choice ones invites your inspection. Imported silk velvets, satin brocades and two-side golf effects richly trimmed and elegantly finished. Every coat bought for the holiday trade of the new store. Selections made now may be reserved for Christmas.

Neckwear...

Showcase after showcase brilliantly illuminated with this most beautiful showing of holiday Silks, rich American and Parisian effects in Imperials, De Joinvilles, Four-in-Hands, Tecks and Bows.

OUR HALF DOLLAR LINE Includes all the latest styles and is very choice. Heavy imported Silks at \$1 and \$1.50, \$2, and up to \$5.

Advertisement for Ben Selling. It features a decorative border with the name 'Ben Selling' in a stylized font. Text includes: 'RELIABLE CLOIERS', 'S. E. Corner Fourth and Morrison Streets Portland, Or.', 'Boys' Gifts: We present with each boy's suit, overcoat or mackintosh, the following articles: Boys' Roller Skates, Boys' Nickel Watches, Boys' Sleds, Boys' Metal-Bound Drums, Boys' Sawbuck and Saw.', 'Men's Hats: Just received, for the holiday trade, the latest shapes of the "/>