

Encouraging Emigration to Oregon, 1831

Its Advantages, as Set Forth by the Boston Society, in a Circular That Has a Place in National History.

By good fortune and the payment of a big price, a prominent Oregon pioneer, a resident of Portland, came into possession of an original copy of the first publication that called attention to Oregon Territory as a desirable country for settlers. Only three or four copies are in existence. The circular is here republished in full, together with facsimiles of the title page, a page of the text, and a map of Oregon Territory, and of the East side of Portland. These reproductions are well worth preserving by those who are interested in the history of the Pacific Northwest.

It has been for many years in serious contemplation to settle with a free and enlightened, but redundant population from the American Republic, that portion of her territory called Oregon, bordering on the Pacific Ocean, and lying between the 42d and 6th parallels of N. latitude.

The American Society, instituted at Boston, Mass., for this purpose, would hereby respectfully advise the friends of the settlement of that country, relative to its physical character, its resources, and advantages over all other uncultivated countries for the occupancy and prosperity of a civilized and active people; and present to them a general view of the plan of operations; and likewise the means, by which persons of good character may secure a participation in the enjoyments and blessings of the most pleasant and healthful part of the globe.

The country is represented, by the concurrent testimony of those who have explored it, to be in general uneven; nevertheless, a large proportion of the territory within 200 miles of the ocean is accounted feasible farming land, and extremely fertile, remarkably mild in climate, so much so that the ice was never known to be entirely formed over the large bays and rivers; nor the frost in the severest days of the winter to stop the progress of vegetation on the bottom lands.

Mr. Filcher, in a recent communication to Congress, through the Hon. J. H. Eaton, Secretary of War, remarks that in 1829 he visited the Columbia River, and "found the middle of the seasons infinitely milder than in the corresponding latitudes and elevations in the valley of the Mississippi, or in the Atlantic States. The winters are less cold and the summers less hot. As a proof of this, may be mentioned, the state of the grass, which is green and juicy nearly all winter, affording excellent pasture for horses, on which those animals not only sustain themselves, but the poor and lean get in good order." The section of the country called by him, the middle regions or plains, he says "is remarkable for a mild climate, a clear sky, a serene atmosphere, and a soft and brilliant sunshine. The nights, when the moon is near full and the hemisphere studied over with stars, are indescribably beautiful. The tide water region has a climate of its own. Ice or snow is seldom seen; the heats are never great; and winter is hardly a distinct season."

For a particular account of the natural geography of the country, of its soil, climate, productions, aborigines, etc., the narrow limits of this work oblige a reference to a pamphlet, published by Hall J. Kelley, A. S. 3d domestic manufactures, to the East Indies.

It is the circumstance of a good home market, that gives any country its greatest value, and must give the Oregon country population, for settlement; advantages unknown in the Western States, whose market are as remote as the shores of the Atlantic. It is not the consideration of good land alone that justifies the occupancy of a country distant from the sea coast, for with its abundant productions, it may yield but few of the comforts and conveniences of life. For instance, a champagne country, with a clayey soil, causes an unhealthy atmosphere; and in the proportion of its approximation to a vertical sun, yields sickness and death.

The want of value to the farmer's surplus produce is his poverty; and has made shipwreck of the fortunes of thousands, who have settled in Ohio, Indiana, and the West, in remote and distant parts of the country, where the influence of no motive, which does not regard alike the interest of every citizen of the Republic.

Incalculable are the advantages, which accrue to commerce and manufactures in this country, will derive from the perennial resource of a trade with the Oregon settlement. The staple commodities of the South, manufactured in the North, and then exchanged in the great market of the Oregon, will better promote the three common interests of the states than any system of imports or revenue duties, which a wise and patriotic people can adopt. Commerce spreading more and more, sailing into new and broader seas—visiting distant shores of innumerable

mon law of our nature, this common concern of mankind is no less important, in its obligations, on nations than individuals. These few pages do not admit of a discussion of this question, nor is it necessary since from an investigation of facts, on other occasions, it has been so clearly deduced, that the duty of protecting the rights and of cherishing and sustaining the interests of the Oregon Indians, devolves on the American Nation; and consequently in her is the right of sovereignty. The import of this word is sometimes misunderstood. It is mistaken for government or jurisdiction itself; whereas it is only a right, which one country has in preference to another, to establish a government, territorial, colonial or any other. It is a matter of deep regret that the United States have not exercised this right of extending jurisdiction over the territory in question, and of putting up barriers against the extension of British jurisdiction.

The right claimed by our citizens to settle is identified among their many privileges, as social beings, of doing acts, within the precincts of a right territory, therefore, follows that settlers, in the pursuit of their proper and laudable business, violate no law or right of the Government of the United States.

Resources of the Country.
The natural advantages of the country, for trade and commerce, foreign, internal and coastwise, are paramount to those found in other parts of America. The confinement of the main navigable rivers, opening into, and beautifying every section of the country, forms the grand river Columbia, whose gentle waters may be traversed by large vessels, 30 miles from the sea; whose either bank affords inlets safe and commodious for harbors. Nature furnishes many clear indications that the mouth of this far-spreading and noble river is soon to become the commercial port of that hemisphere, the great business place of nations, interchanging the commodities and productions of Western America and the East Indies.

Much of the country within 200 miles of the ocean is favorable to cultivation. The valley of the Multnomah is particularly so, being extremely fertile. The advantages, generally, for acquiring property are paramount to those on the coast, and within the distance of a coasting trade, boards bring from \$50 to \$80 per 1000, and such is the market that no considerable reductions of these prices can ever be reasonably expected. The production of vegetables, grain and cattle, will require comparatively but little labor; these articles, together with the spontaneous growth of the soil, and the produce of the mines, in general, will find a market at home, and there by comfort and enrich the settlers. Superfluous articles may be shipped from their doors to distant ports, and return to the coast, by the Columbia, the timber, etc., may be sent to the western coast of South America, the islands in the Pacific; breadstuffs, furs, salmon and many articles of domestic manufactures, to the East Indies.

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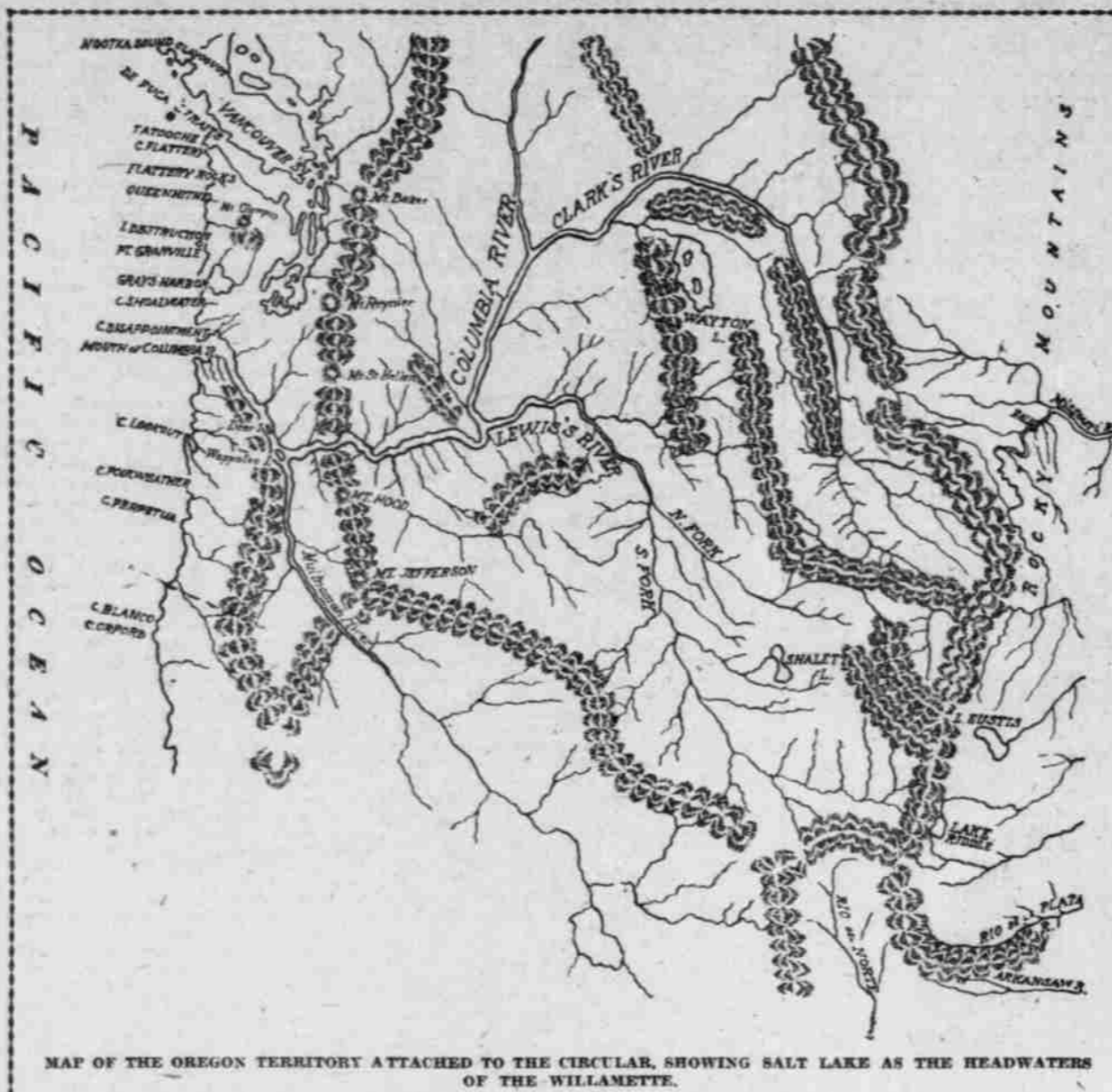
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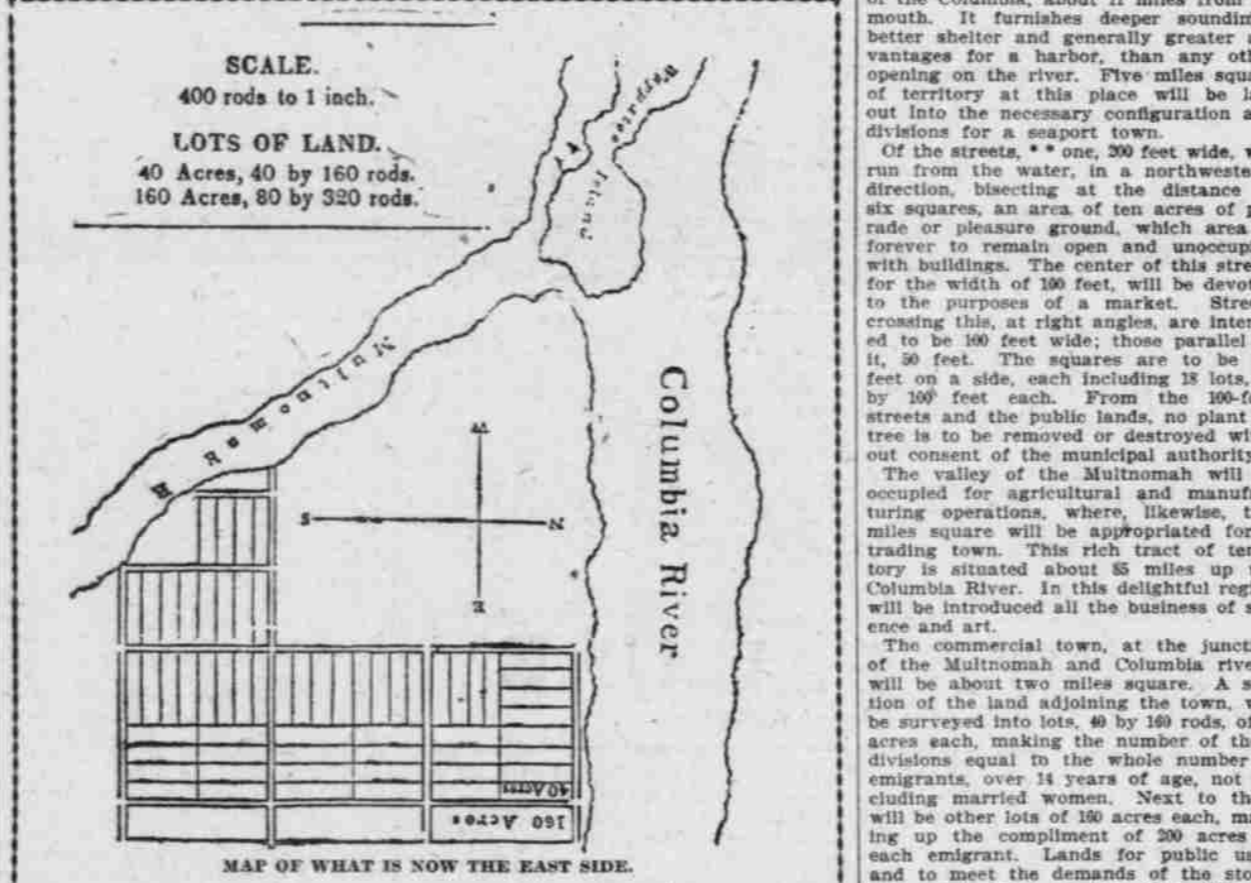
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MAP OF THE OREGON TERRITORY ATTACHED TO THE CIRCULAR, SHOWING SALT LAKE AS THE HEADWATERS OF THE WILLAMETTE.

wealth, will conduct home the full tide of a golden traffic.

National Advantages.
In the following memorial, offered at the present session, for the consideration of Congress, are some of the National advantages which may accrue from a permanent possession of Oregon. To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives, in Congress Assembled. The American Society for encouraging the



MAP OF WHAT IS NOW THE EAST SIDE.

Settlement of the Oregon Territory, instituted in A. D. 1829, and incorporated by the Government of Massachusetts, actuated by a faithful regard to duty, have cheerfully engaged in the work of opening to a civilized and virtuous population, that part of Western America, called Oregon.

They are convinced that if that country should be settled under the auspices of the Government of the United States of America from such of her worthy sons, who have the spirit of those civil and religious institutions, which constitute the living fountain, and the very perennial source of her National prosperity, great benefits must result to mankind. They believe that there the skillful and persevering hand of industry might be employed with unparalleled advantage; that there science and the arts, the invaluable privileges of a free and liberal government, and the refinements and ornaments of Christianity, diffusing each its blessing, would harmoniously unite in meliorating the moral condition of the people, in promoting the comfort and happiness of the settlers, and in augmenting the wealth and power of the Republic.

The uniform testimony of an intelligent multitude have established the fact that the country in question is a beautiful plain, and all the uncultivated parts of the earth. Its peculiar location and facilities, and physical resources for trade and commerce, its climate, its salubrious atmosphere, its fertility of soil, its rich and abundant productions, its extensive forests of valuable timber, and its great water channel, diversifying, by its numerous branches the whole country, and spreading canals through every part of it, are sure indications that Providence has designed this last reach of enlightened emigration to be the residence of a people whose singular advantages will give them unsurpassed power and prosperity.

These things have excited the admiration of every observer, and have settled in the policy of the British nation the determined purpose of possessing and occupying, as their own, and have induced their Parliament to confer on the Hudson's Bay Company charters and privileges for occupying, and settlements the fertile banks of the Columbia, which settlements have been made, and are now in progress, under the auspices of the culture secured by the provisions of a colonial government.

The society conceive it clearly deduced, from all the facts in the case, that the right of sovereignty over the Oregon Territory is vested in the Government of the United States of America, consequently, in her is the exclusive right of colonizing that country, and of introducing into it the various business and benefits of civilized life.

The expense and labor necessary to the accomplishment of this work, enjoying by Providence, made easy by nature, and urged and encouraged by the persuasive motives of philanthropy, are in no degree commensurate with the National blessings to be derived from it, among which are enumerated the following:

The moral condition of the aborigines, if blessed by the influences of a refined and religious community, will be improved, and an attempt to enlighten the minds and to dignify the nature of this unfortunate race may no longer be defeated by intestine plans.

Their unjust and unequal alliances with another nation may be broken, and their friends secured to them.

By means, thus honorable, that valuable

ment, it should be built upon the most finished improvements of others. Whether the settlers are to be considered children of mature age, made free, and setting up for themselves, constituting, in some degree, an independent province, the friend and ally of the mother country; sharing in her generous and maternal solicitude; or whether they are to be a colony, planted, cherished and protected by her, depends entirely on Congress. That the latter should be the case is the prayer of a memorial, at the present time before that august assembly of talents, virtue and wisdom.

Should the emigrants fall of that character, which reason and justice dictate, and humanity calls for, they will attempt to make for themselves just and equal laws, under the provisions of a form of government, so far made a free democratic representative, as will be consistent with an unequivocal recognition of the sovereignty of the American Republic. It will be in most respects, a transcript of the government of Michigan Territory. The Governor, Secretary, Treasurer and Board of Land Commissioners, being the appointments of the society; it will continue two years, unless Congress, before the expiration of this time, prescribes a substitute.

The emigrant citizens will leave the land of their fathers, under no circumstances of oppression, and with no feeling of discontent, resolved still to cultivate only the fields of civil and religious freedom, and unobscured by the most kind and felicitous, and civilized man attains his greatest power, and his most dignified superiority over the man in ignorance or in yassalage; still animated by the spirit of the virtues and the most kind with that of the best lovers of American Independence, they must, they will continue free.

Religion.
The religion of the settlement, it is hoped, will be the religion of conscience, and the king of heaven. No people can long continue free and happy, without acknowledging, with pious reverence and confidence, the laws of their Maker, and full toleration to all committive of his conscientious worshippers, however various their forms, and feeling due respect for him, who administers at the sacred altar, and is accounted worthy to sit together with God, in labors that succeed unto eternal life.

The settlers will lose none of their religious privileges and comforts. Churches of different denominations will be organized before emigration, who will take with them, respectively, their pastors.

There will be, given, in Oregon, encouragement for virtuous and well educated young men, who regard the interests of others as their own, to engage in the great work of imparting moral and religious instruction to the Indians.

Education.
The education of youth being the safeguard of a free government, and the basis of its most valuable blessings, becomes of transcendent importance. In order, then, to diffuse elementary knowledge, and to enlighten the minds of the children of the settlers and of the Indian tribes, some efficient and appropriate system of education will be adopted; and whatever will best civilize the manners, reform the moral habits, and enlighten and free it from the grasp of superstition, will be parts of this system.

Schools of every grade will be opened, as soon as the settlement is effected, and temporary buildings provided. Agricultural and classical institutions, and colleges succeeding common and primary schools are deemed practical systems of education. These will be established; and in them, as well as in the schools, will be taught the rudiments of learning, the sciences, farming industry, and that knowledge of men and things which enlighten and dignify the mind.

Persons of good education will find many inducements to emigrate, some "apt to teach," to share in the business of instruction; others, versed in law and polity, and acquainted with the principles of legislation, to sustain offices in the administration of government.

Emigrants.
The ultimate success of the settlement depends on the virtuous qualities of its members. If its elementary principles are defective, the result of its operations will be uncertain, and productive of but little good, if not a total failure. Next to these settled ought not, therefore, to be the receipt of vicious characters, or drones too indolent to pursue any honest or useful occupation—of cunning persons, who possess the art of flattery, and who, by the principles of false flattery, and riches, who, faithless to good order, are often ready to sap the foundation of morality and religion; and lastly, men of steady habits, virtuous intentions, endeavoring to cultivate practical knowl-

edge and honest industry, will be deemed worthy of the enterprise, and such persons may, in Oregon, secure to themselves a pleasant home and competency of good things; subvert individual happiness, and obtain the great objects of founding the settlement. Before embarkation it will be required of all proposing to emigrate, to satisfy the society by certificates or otherwise, of good moral character and industrial habits.

Emigrants, who go to the Oregon country in the manner, and under the encouragements announced in this pamphlet, each to receive, gratuitously, most of the expenses of emigration and a landed estate, valued from \$200 to \$1000, situated where the healthfulness of climate, the good market for every product of earth or of labor, and the enjoyment of a free and liberal government, will conspire to make life easy.

Poor children, and children of charity institutions, can be admitted. These, with the means of moderate education, will find a good living, and an honorable retreat from disgrace and suffering.

Each emigrant, over 14 years of age, not including married women, and each child that an orphan, or without a parent in that country, will receive a lot of seaport land, containing 5000 square feet, or two farming lots in the valley of the Multnomah, containing respectively, 40 acres and 160 acres. These lands, excepting what the English settlers have under cultivation, are covered with a heavy growth of valuable timber, and will be drawn by settlers, individually, as soon as surveyed.

The society contemplate opening that country only to enlightened emigrants, and they are desirous of receiving no more than those of philanthropy and patriotism. They own no landed estates in Oregon, and expect no interest there, that may not be received by any American citizen, who will associate with them, it is not their desire to urge the enlistment of any person, however his condition may be improved by it; and far be it from them, to induce any individual to leave his native land, and to forsake his friends and country, for the sake of emigrating. The enterprise is replete with motives for emigrations. It is desirable, however, to increase the proportion of those enlisting, in whose characters are combined science and integrity, to sustain offices in the government.

Enlistments should be made of properly educated persons, to fill the civil, military and literary rolls—of Clergymen and Physicians—of persons possessing a scientific knowledge of the different branches of mathematics and natural philosophy, to constitute corps on engineering, surveying, astronomy, geology and botany—of farmers—of the following mechanics, viz. master shipbuilders, millwrights, wheelwrights, carpenters, blacksmiths, tinner, tanners, curriers, shoemakers, tailors, hatters, &c.; of capitalists, taking with them vessels suitable for the lumber trade, and whale and salmon fisheries, both of which pursuits are, and for many years will continue, vastly profitable; of capitalists, who will carry out the iron parts of gristmills, sawmills, of nail-making machinery, &c. who will establish a paper mill, a printing press, a manufactory of window glass, and a foundry of iron ware.

Each emigrant, who is entitled to receive gratuitously, a lot of land, is required to advance a pledge of 20 dollars, that he or she will make the emigration, without disappointment to the society. On payment of the pledge, the following certificate will be given. They may be obtained, together with this pamphlet, if any of the Agents named at the end of this pamphlet.

NO.
This Certifies that

1. s. has paid Twenty Dollars to the American Society for encouraging the settlement of the Oregon Territory, as a pledge for the faithful performance of obligations, to be stipulated and defined by Covenant between him and the said Society.

President.
Secretary.

N. B. The following are the principal conditions and stipulations.

SAMPLE PAGE OF THE CIRCULAR.

Whatever may be the frame of gov-