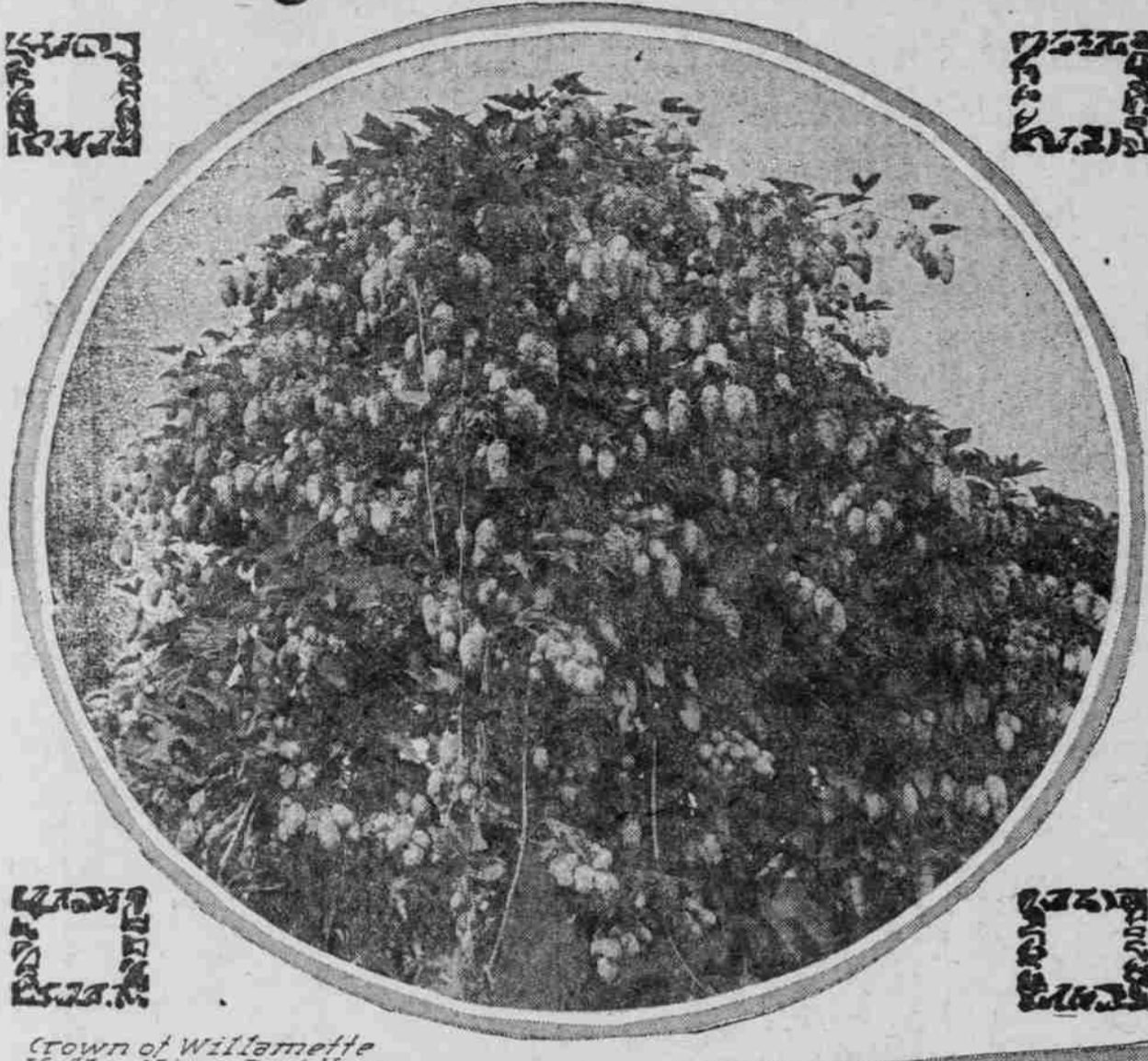




Hop Grower's Rainbow Comes With Prohibition

National Drouth Brings Paradoxical Prosperity to Growers of Necessary Ingredient for Beer.



Crown of Willamette Valley Vine, Best Hops Known.



Oregon Yards Set Standard for Careful Cultivation.

BY DE WITT HARRY.
(Copyright, 1920.)

RECENT heavy rains were expected by Oregon hop growers as their annual picking showers, for each season they have a dark, dreary period during their harvest. Just a few short years back they were confronted with storm clouds presaging a period of stress with the advent of prohibition and the spread of the wave throughout the United States infected them with such a feeling of gloom that many of the Oregon fields were plowed under and given over to other uses.

However, the late showers were interspersed with fleeting periods of sunshine and an occasional rainbow helped to make pleasant the moisture, the pickers are happy as their work was worth more on account of the gain in weight and the crop is being placed in the dryers in first-class condition. In marketing conditions somewhat a similar occurrence has taken place for the clouds of poor demand have been banished and the present day market is better than ever before. Nineteen hundred and twenty seems to be a year of paradoxes and one of the most extreme is that in this Oregon crop for, with the coming of prohibition, has come wealth for the growers of that essential element for the preparation of malt beverages, the hop.

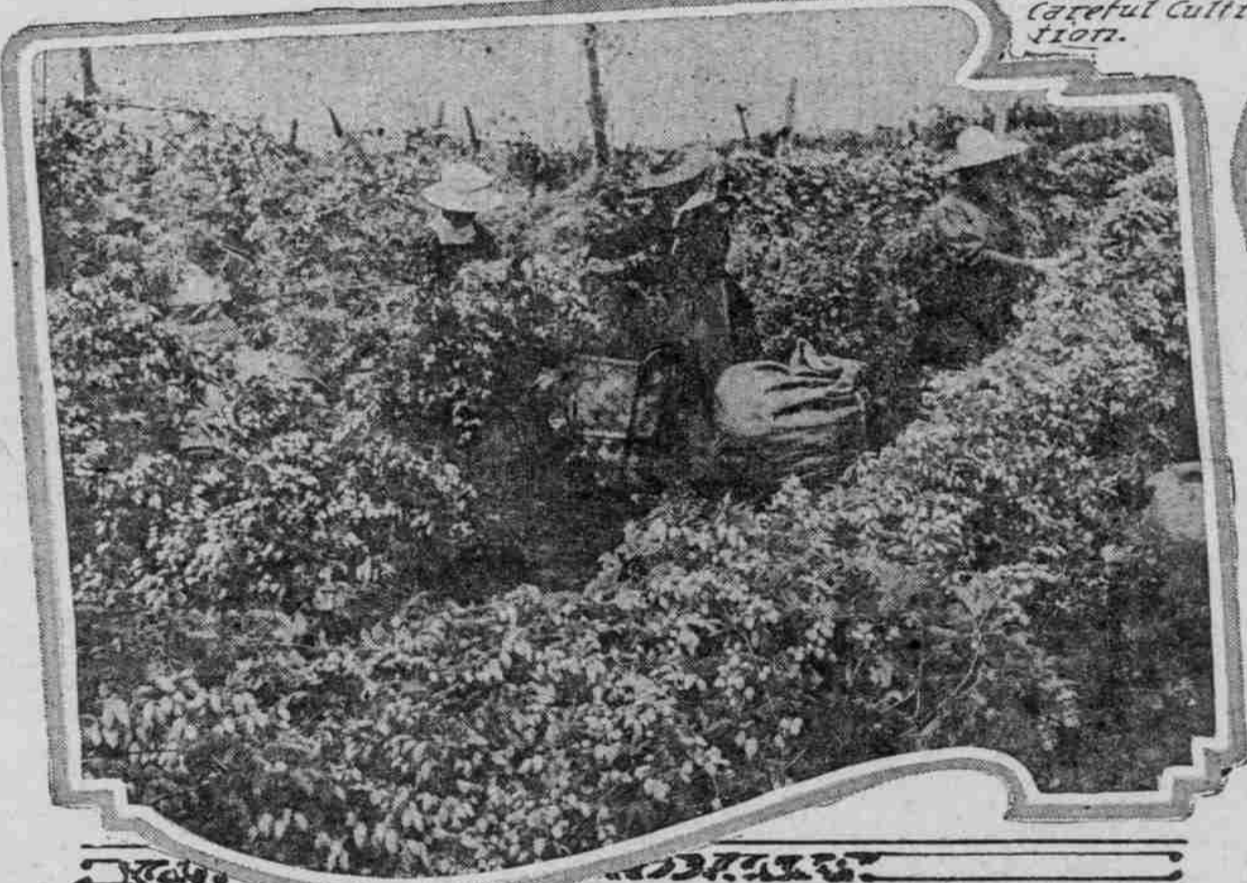
Market Dream Surpassed.

At one time, about ten years ago, Oregon had 35,000 acres in hops—today there are between 12,000 and 14,000 acres producing in the state. When the industry was at its climax here the production ran about 160,000 200-pound bales a year. This year Oregon will likely place about 60,000 bales on the market. In the old times it was a gamble of the biggest type, this growing of hops, with the varied fluctuations in price and no stability. Today the grower seems to be playing a sure thing, if such exists.

Twenty-five-cent hops used to be the dream of the rancher of old and he made good profits at 6 and 7 cents a pound. Talk of 25-cent hops today and you will be met with a sneer, even 45-cent hops have been reached and passed and the indications are that this year's crop will market at 60 cents or even better, depending on market conditions. What the profits are may be figured by the average man who can keep track of rising costs in production and keep sight, at the same time, of the fact that the growers of old made good money at 8 cents. Hops have sold as low as 2 cents a pound in Oregon, or \$4 a bale. At \$9 a bale the grower seemed to have reached the limit of his imagination, but with today's possible crest price of \$120 per bale the rainbow's end and the big pot of gold for the Oregon grower seems to have been reached.

Panic Causes Lost Fortunes.

Four years ago none of the men in this state who had made it their life work to plant hops and had their average planted would have given even the shortest of songs for their chances of gain. The onward engulfing sweep of prohibition threatened to smother them in its dry dust. California, to the south of us, only last year had a similar experience, only on a greatly magnified scale, when the citizens of that state wept in horror of their fate with the despoiling of the wine grape industry when the nation became an arid desert. Grape growers there, like hop growers here, sold their vineyards for a song, as the hop ranches had gone before them, or turned their land over to the scaring blades of gang plows. Blind, unreasoning fear affected them all and they got out from under, dodged disaster by a hair-breadth as they both thought, and



Women Fast Fingers Expect Pickers Make as High as \$700 Daily.

today all who became infected by the panic are busily engaged in kicking themselves or trying to get back in the game they abandoned.

Prices unbelievable have been obtained for the hop and grape crops, both real essentials in the manufacture of malt or spirituous beverages now under the ban of this nation. It remained for the wine and beer industries to be ruined for the producers to make fortunes. Where do the hops and the grapes go?

Other Nations Have Drink.

Prohibition has not been world-wide, this is the main answer. The explanation of the different phases of the market on similar grounds ceases here as far as any similarity between hops and grapes exists. Grapes have found other uses, for no matter how split it may be the contention that a great proportion of the product of the vineyards and ranches is being used in the sub rosa creation of unlawful beverages, the producers agree that only a small proportion of the output is being used in this manner. With the advent of prohibition people have demanded some substitute for the drink that used to cheer, something that at least was palatable and would subdue thirst, if not quench it. Long accustomed to the taste of certain standard types of drinks, manufacturers got busy and created new concoctions that in appearance and taste resembled the beverages of yore, if minus their kick. These drinks have proven exceedingly popular and a new class of drinkers have sprung up, for the woman of today has her innocuous tippie in company with man, and a host of soft drink palaces and bars have been the result in all sections of the nation, catering to the new demand. It is the consensus of opinion among purveyors that quantity fluid consumption has increased in the country today, and manufacturers of the modern soft drink are getting more money for their product than was paid for the snappy potions of 1919 (Oregon 1915).

This newly created business is absorbing the major portion of California's grapes. Dry, they are shipped broadcast; the juice, unfermented, to

day has an almost insatiable market, and the raisin industry has also taken a new lease on life. Whether the bootleg manufacturers or the home wine plants absorb enough of this output to be a serious element for consideration is a matter of doubt, though it is admitted that dry grapes are freshened and used in wine making. Raisins are the favored mode for imparting some little tinge of wild life to the home product, and even the unfermented juices are made use of by those who work them over with the addition of certain carefully guarded ingredients for the production of draughts that have a real punch.

Hop Is Real Outlaw.

Enough for the grape. It has a side of respectability that makes it possible for marketing in all rectitude. Not so the outlaw hop. It is used in making beer or similar drinks. Oregon hops, bright in color, have been in great demand the world over, especially in the preparation of light ales, for which they are especially adapted. In England many of the brewers would be lost did they not have their stock of Oregon hops for their necessary blending, and it is just this little ingredient from across the sea that gives them their little endearing touch of palatability that lingers on the tongue of the drinker.

Henry Guinness & Sons, Ltd. of Dublin make what is admitted to be one of the best brands of stout in the world. Their plant is a model one, visitors always welcome. Uninformed guides take charge of the parties, tell of the greatness of the Guinness family, and then exhibit the plant in its entirety. Entering the malting room, the tall, uniformed Irishman in charge will gather his party together and ask them to come close while he exhibits the component parts of the finished stout.

Tribute Paid to Oregon.

"Hear in this case" he extolls with an imitable brogue, "we find the ingredients that go to the making of Guinness famed stouts and porters. This is the rare Orish malt, this th' corn, these dark hops are th' Kentish hops and these brite ones are th' rarest and most select hops in th' world, th' Oregon (with a most de-

lightful roll that makes you homesick) hops from th' state of Oregon in the United States of America, which is far on th' western coast of that land across th' sea."

And today it is England that is creating the market for Oregon's hops. It is the buyers from that country who are after the product of the Willamette valley yards this year, and they early invaded the district and contracted for as much as they could. Many farmers, of course, held out for more money, 60 cents a pound did not appeal to them, and some may have set more. Anyhow, they had hopes that the market would reach a 75-cent peak this fall and they might not have been such bad guessers if the trouble with exchange had not dropped up at this time. With the English pound sterling quoted today at practically one-third off, it is nearly impossible for the buyers from that country to compete in the open market, as this means that they have to pay 60 cents for hops plus one-third off in exchange, this meaning that by the time they got the product laid down in their own breweries they have easily reached more than a dollar a pound with freights and packing charges. No matter how much the Englishman loves his beer, it is doubtful if he can afford to pay such an exorbitant price for it. In other words starve in order to drink.

Growers Are in Quandary.

This has put the Oregon grower between the devil and the deep sea, for he is in a real quandary. There are a number of dealers who are willing to take a chance and contract hops at the prevailing market, but the rancher, sometimes, does not care to deal with them; he is holding out for more. If rates of exchange are adjusted he will doubtless get it, always providing he does not have to sell at the market in order to get the cash. In this event the dealer will either get the raise should it come, or get it in the neck if it falls. The market situation is in an impasse today, both sides trying to wait the other out.

Hop picking in Oregon has always had its side of appeal to many as a source of ready and substantial income at a time when it was needed.

Professional pickers—if people may be called who work at the trade for only a few weeks each year—flock to the fields each fall and get their winter stake. Strange companions are met in a hopyard.

The fall harvest season in Oregon may properly be said to start with the hop picking. Of late years some families have made it a practice to take their automobiles and camping outfits and follow the fall work from place to place. Taking to the open in the middle of September, they have been able to go nearly steadily until late October, about six weeks of good moneyed work. First came the hop gathering, then the prunes, apples, other fruits and finally haying and the grain fields. Many mothers in this state who have to fend for their own take to the hopfields in the fall, sometimes with their children, and make enough money in the short season to keep their youngsters in school for the winter.

Field Conditions Show Change.

An outing in the hop fields is not an exceptional thing, though more and more people nowadays are prone to take it as an experiment. The old-timers know what it means and go there for what there is in it. Ten years ago, when Oregon raised bumper crops, the pickers came from far and wide, brought their own blankets, braced for themselves, had their own tents or slept on brush beds in the open and were content to pick the cleanest kind of hops for 50 cents a hundred. Today they get model camps, their firewood is furnished them, stores and supply depots are at each camp, they are taken from their homes to the fields and returned and paid at the rate of \$1.50 per hundred. Last year there was a scarcity in pickers, this year the labor situation is excellent and managers of yards have had to exercise discretion to prevent overloading with help. Water is piped on several of the near-by model camps and the shed houses are well constructed, separated from each other to insure privacy and even straw furnished for bedding. Peddlers and wagon dealers visit the yards several times daily with all their wares of foodstuffs and the management places an automobile at the disposal of the pickers to run their town errands. Mail service is usually of the best.

The season generally lasts from 10 to 25 days, depending on the help and size of the crop, and is well under way now. The pickers stop between showers but do not seem to mind the moisture and are right at their job as soon as the rain has ceased. Early morning picking is favored by many, as they hold that they get better weight when the dew is on the vines. The same belief governs those who get out right after a shower. The practice in the yards in this section is to plant the hops in hills and then train the vines so that they will climb posts and then run along wires with the blossoms hanging down.

When it comes time to pick the wires are let down and the picker has the crop right at hand and in easy reach. The rule is usually that each vine may be stripped as the picker progresses and that no leaves or bits of brush are to be placed with the hops. Clean picking is the aim of the yard owners, but in many cases the picker wants to get weight and quantity. Many a torrid battle has been waged just over this little difference.

Winter Funds Amassed.

Good pickers in the fields should gather from 400 pounds up daily. An average of the daily wage would likely show about \$5 each, though many go far in excess of this figure. There are no stated hours and some of those who are keen for the cash work long shifts. Almost anyone should be able to gather 300 pounds daily and many couples in the fields earn \$11 a day or better. Take this amount for three weeks and then follow towards the next crop harvest and through the six weeks of the season, the winter exchequer has several hundreds of dollars and those who did the work a good healthy tone with little expense.

There are certain people in Oregon, women especially, who get out on the hop harvest each year. They are usually well known to the ranchers and are in demand. Floating labor has been proven not nearly as efficient as are these people. Neighbors or nearby residents also are a great help and in many places look on the money earned in this way as a winter fall. The city people who take to the open and follow the harvests seldom have any definite programme or schedule and just make their way along as their fancy dictates. Indians who used to come and help are seldom seen nowadays, as they are not encouraged. The old-fashioned Indian hop picker came in state with all his family, dogs and cattle and the owner of the place had to care for them all. However, the sypsy life of the free harvests will always be attractive and there will always be people who will take it up and the healthy labor it brings. The problem in Oregon now is to get more city people out in the fields if possible.

Amateur Brewers Waste Hops.

Not having the skill or ability of the professional brewer the home brewer of today, at least until he has progressed far enough along to master the art, manages to use twice the quantity of hops necessary in the making of good beer. This causes a waste, but how much of the crop goes into these channels is a matter of doubt. Hops are a queer commodity and many bales have been held in storage by breweries all over the country that are just being released and placed on the market. It is possible today to go into several places that cater to the home trade in Portland and buy hops in various sized

packages. Some of the sales are made loose in bags, some in pressed cubes. In South America they have an excellent market.

In the treatment of the crop at the yards it does not make a great deal of difference about the weather, and despite the rains of the past few days the reports are that this year's crop is one of the best yet. On the hops being picked they are weighed and the picker given a ticket calling for the amount gathered. The loose hops are then taken to kilns and there dumped on a level floor and dried in an even temperature for from 14 to 17 hours. This is the time they are given sulphur treatment, which has the double effect of bleaching the hops and of killing all vermin. This year's hops, an extra prime crop that will likely be in great demand for their excellence, have been pronounced exceptionally free from lice.

After the drying is completed the hops are taken to a cooling room, where they are again returned to normal temperature and then the crop is picked over and baled, ready for market. It is at this time that the buyers come after the crop and the 200-pound bales are then the standard of commerce and they make their journeys to the world markets in this form. In some few cases expensive presses have been installed for reducing the bulk of the crop, but the usual practice is to sell loose. South America, however, prefers the compressed output. The Oregon hop can usually be easily spotted on account of its brightness.

In a good yard the pickers can harvest between two and three 100-pound baskets from one hill and when the clusters are prime, as is the case this year, the harvest may be even better. This year's crop is one of the best the state has ever had in its history and the only thing that is bothering the growers is their market. If it will hold, and this seems to hinge mainly on the exchange situation, they will indeed find their pot of gold at the rainbow's end when the clouds of prohibition had nearly made them abandon hope.

Frogs' Eyes Are Cameras.

Boys' Life.

The smallest camera in the world which has actually "taken" pictures is doubtless the eyes of the frog. It has been found that if a frog is kept in the dark for some time the retina of the eye, on being dissected, is found to have a purple reddish color, which fades away or becomes bleached on exposure to daylight. If the eye be placed in front of a window and left there, or "exposed" for some time and then fixed in a 4 per cent solution of alum the optogram is partially fixed and retains an inverted picture of the window. It is claimed that by a similar photographic process the last picture or image retained by the eye of a dead man or animal may be preserved.



Harvest Over, Pickers Cash Their Tickets.