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TUESDAY - - - MAY 14, 1895

OLD WASCO COUNTY.

A FEW BRIEF FACTS CONCERNING ITS RESOURCES.

Fruits, Fish, Farm and Forests--She Has Them All, and Unlimited Water Power.

SOIL AND CROPS.

The northwestern portion of the United States, and a large portion of British Columbia was at one time subjected to a tremendous overflow of lava, and in consequence the mountain ranges are composed of basalt, while the prairies of Eastern Oregon and Washington have that same material for a foundation. It is the greatest mass of basalt in the known globe. Following this, the country between the Rocky mountains and the Cascades, or their continuation, the Sierra Nevadas, was covered by a vast inland sea, and the soil of this region therefore is sedimentary, consequently largely of decomposed basalt, and is therefore exceedingly rich in plant food, and its wearing qualities are unexcelled. It will stand recropping to cereals longer than any other, and is in this respect practically inexhaustible. It yields generously, even to the slipshod methods of farming to which much of it is subjected, and while not every crop is the best, such a thing as a total failure is unknown. It retains moisture well, and good crops of wheat can be, and in some years have been grown without seeing a drop of rain from the time the seed was sown until the grain was harvested.

Everything that can be grown in the temperate zone will do well here, though, in common with most of the Pacific coast, corn is not raised extensively on account of the coolness of the nights. Wheat, oats, barley, potatoes and vegetables of all kinds do well and yield abundantly. The staple crop of the country has been, and for that matter is yet, wheat, which was raised in large quantities, and which found its market in Europe, going by way of the Horn. Until very recently this was depended upon by the farmers as the sum total of farming. The recent extremely low prices for wheat has changed this, and the farmers soon found that putting their wheat into hogs and cattle was far more profitable than shipping it. Growing the wheat can be done at trifling expense, and in fact it can be put in the stack or barn ready for feeding at a less price per bushel than corn. Under the methods used, one man with six horses will plough eight acres per day, and as the seed is sown by machinery, the broadcast sower, covering a strip eighty feet in width, a whole farm can be seeded in a few days. The harvesting is done with headers, and a half dozen men and boys will put twenty-five acres in the stack every day. There is no cultivation required as in the case of corn, and hence one man will seed and harvest four or five times the acreage he could in that grain.

Heretofore farmers have shipped wheat and imported bacon and other hog products; now the grain fields of Wasco are not only supplying the local demand, but the surplus is finding a market in Omaha and Chicago. This will stimulate the farming industry, as it not only gives a market for the grain, but cuts off the expense of threshing, the costs of sacks, and the hauling of the grain to market, the three items of expense amounting to from 20 to 30 cents per bushel, according to distance from the shipping point. Oats, barley and rye all do well, but are not raised in quantities larger than will supply the local market, except such as is cut when in the milk for hay, and they are used almost universally for that purpose. Last year Wasco county shipped about 600,000 bushels of wheat, an amount that will probably not be increased, unless high prices prevail, as more and more of it will be fed to stock. Potatoes are a sure crop, and yield well, and though raised only to meet the local demand, the call from the East met with response here, and some 15 carloads were shipped this spring. Onions, lettuce and radishes grown in the open air were in the markets early in March, and in abundance.

STOCK.

In the earlier settlement of the country it was devoted entirely to stock-raising the prairies and the hillsides being covered with a luxuriant growth of bunchgrass, which gave sustenance to vast herds of cattle and horses. For several years that was the sole industry, and the idea prevailed that the land would not grow anything, but as experiments showed that it was a prolific and unfailing soil, the bunchgrass lands began to be turned into wheat fields. In spite of this, however, the stock industry is the leading one of Eastern Oregon, and is a very important one in Wasco county. The sloping hillsides are covered with cattle, and when a certain distance from the river is reached, usually about thirty miles, the lands are still devoted to stock-raising on account of the expense of hauling farm products to market. While the exact figures are not attainable, a conservative estimate of the number of cattle shipped from this point each year shows that the grand total reaches the handsome sum of 206 carloads, or about 5,500 head. To this should be added 220 carloads of sheep and sixty of hogs. The assessor's figures for 1894 show that the county has 210,000 sheep, and besides this Crook county, lying to the south of us, has as many more, and both the increase and wool from these vast flocks find their market at The Dalles. In the summer these flocks find fresh and abundant pastures in the Cascade mountains. They are usually run in flocks of from 1,500 to 3,000, and as soon as the shearing season is over they are started for the mountains, following the grass up, as the season opens often being close to the retreating snows, and only stopping at the line of perpetual snow on Hood, Jefferson, and the other great peaks. In the fall they feed down the mountains again, nipping the tender grasses started by the fall rains, and arriving at their winter quarters in fine condition. The raising of horses is being abandoned, owing to their low price, but we add by way of information that this was the original home of the "noble animal." In the fossil beds of the John Day (in some respects the finest in the world) are found the petrified remains of Eo-hippus, the primal horse. The full grown animals were not larger than a good sized sheep.

WOOL.

It is hard to estimate the amount of wool grown in this county, for that from Morrow and Grant counties finds market at The Dalles, Wasco's county seat, and considerable comes from Klickitat county, Washington, on the north. It is probably in the neighborhood of 2,000,000 pounds. The Dalles is the greatest wool shipping point in the United States; that is, there is more wool gathered here from first hands. The amounts will run from 4,500,000 to 7,000,000 pounds, or, on an average, about 3,000 tons. Large fortunes have been accumulated in the industry, and though prices are now low, it is still profitable, and the outlook is brighter on account of the increased and increasing prices of mutton; prices that promise to be permanent, not only for mutton, but for beef, and which will compensate largely for the low price of wool prevailing the past two years.

Continued.

Pay the County Debt.

All county warrants registered prior to Sept. 1st, 1891, will be paid if presented at my office, corner 3d and Washington streets, The Dalles, Or. Interest ceases after May 10, 1895.

WM. MICHELL,
County Treasurer.

Mexican Mustang Liniment

for

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Caked & Inflamed Udders,
Piles,
Rheumatic Pains,
Bruises and Strains,
Running Sores,
Inflammations,
Stiff joints,
Harness & Saddle Sores,
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Lumbago,
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Insect Bites,
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All Horse Ailments,
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Mustang Liniment conquers Pain, Makes Man or Beast well again.

THE DALLES

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Address any of the above well known firms, or

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