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The Growth and Development of Oregon

Address delivered by Jefferson Myers, State Treasurer, June 20th, at the annual meeting of the Linn County Pioneer Association, Brownsville, Ore.

The Growth of Oregon

On Sept. 28, 1790 a fine sailing vessel, called the Columbia, having been granted sea letters signed by George Washington, John Hancock and the foreign consul at Boston, put to sea. She had recently been overhauled after completing a trip round the world, and she was in good shape and thoroughly seaworthy. Her captain's name was Gray, and a finer sailor or never handled a ship. A little more than 20 months later this splendid ship with its captain and crew, after having discovered Grays Harbor, safely crossed the bar of the River of the West. This was an occasion of much rejoicing and to hallow the memory of the glorious event, the noble ship that carried the "Stars and Stripes" around the globe now bestowed upon the river her own fair name—the Columbia.

In 1805 the Lewis and Clark expedition came to the mouth of the Columbia, the first party of pioneers to make the journey overland.

Those were strenuous days. In 1810, John Astor established the Pacific Fur company at Fort Astor. Practically everything in the way of provisions was brought in by sailing vessels from the east. Dr. John McLoughlin in 1824 decided that it was practicable for the white men at the Fort to produce their own provisions. He also saw that by moving farther up the Columbia he would be nearer the center of the Indian population, with which his company desired to trade. He therefore established Fort Vancouver as the principal trading post on the Columbia and developed a farm of 3000 acres on which agriculture, including fruit growing and dairying prospered. He also manufactured flour and lumber. These ventures marked the beginning of higher civilization in the Oregon country.

At this time the Oregon colonists were without any form of government. The United States was not yet ready to extend a government over Oregon. Each individual was in effect a law unto himself. The desire for some controlling power was generally felt in order that the organization and development of the territory might be advanced. That the right of the settlers might be judicially defined and protected and that matters in dispute might be equitably settled. The matter was brought to a head by the death of Ewing Young, the first independent settler in Oregon who died on February 15, 1841, leaving a valuable estate. There existed no law by which the estate could be administered. In this emergency immediate action was imperative. A meeting was held on February 17, 1841 and a committee appointed to suggest the necessary officers who were chosen the following day. Among these was a supreme judge with probate powers. His first official act was the appointment of an administrator of Young's estate on April 15, 1841. Thirty-seven hundred dollars of the money realized out of the estate was used to build at Oregon City the first jail of its kind west of the Rockies. Four subsequent meetings were held by the settlers during the next two years for the purpose of perfecting the organization. On this occasion both the friends and enemies of the proposed government met at Champeog. The voters drilled and trained by the Hudson's Bay company were promptly on the ground in the open field near a small house, and without any hesitancy voted "No," when they should have voted "Yes" under the tactics suggested by Le Breton, who after there had been considerable skirmishing in force, as if to feel the strength of the enemy, concluded that there was a fair chance for the adoption of the report of the committee and exclaimed, "We can risk it; let us divide and count." Jo Meek thundered out "Who's for a divide?" and stepping quickly in front of the settlers he said in a clear voice, "All for the report of the Committee and organization will follow me." This move was sudden and quite unexpected at that early stage in the proceedings and its effect was electrical. Americans followed the patriotic, large-hearted trapper, and when the count was taken there were 52 for a provisional government and 50 against it. And so the Provisional Government of Oregon came into being. They had some politicians even in that day. Here are the names of the men, who with Jo Meek voted for the first government of Oregon:

Pleasant M. Armstrong, Dr. I. L. Babcock, Dr. W. J. Bailey, Alanson Beers, J. C. Bridges, Hugh Burns, Charles Camps, Wm. Cannon, Rev. Harvey Clark, Medorem Crawford, Amos Cook, Allen J. Davis, Wm. M. Coughty, Geo. W. Ebberts, Francis Fletcher, Geo. Gay, Joseph Gale, Wm. H. Gray, Rev. John Geffrin, Webley Hauhurst, David Hill, Joseph Holman, John Howard, Rev. L. H. Judson, Geo. W. Le Breton, Rev. David Leslie, Reuben Lewis, Etienne Lucier, Francis X. Matthew, Joseph L. Meek, Wm. McCarty, Rev. Gustavus Hines, Wm. Johnson, T. J. Hubbard, Charles McKay, Robert Moore, John L. Morrison, Dr. Robert Newell, James A. O'Neil, Rev. J. L. Parrish, Jno. Edmunds Piekernell, James R. Robb, Osborne Russell, Robert Shortness, Alvin T. Smith, Sidney Smith, Solomon H. Smith, Calvin Tibbets, David Weston, Caleb Wilkins, A. E. Wilson, Dr. W. H. Wilson.

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goods. They are famous. One of the first woolen mills in Oregon was established in 1875 at Brownsville and as far back as 1854 the first wool carding mill was introduced in Albany.

In religious matters Linn county occupies a high place of honor. All of you are familiar with the "United Presbyterian Church," but it may surprise you to know that the first congregation organized in North America under the name of "United Presbyterians" was organized in Albany, Oregon, Oct. 10, 1853. Only a week ago a monument was unveiled at Providence Church, east of Crabtree, in memory of Joab Powell, famous Linn county Baptist preacher, and founder of the Providence church. It is said of Joab that in his ministry he baptized over 3000 souls, truly a wonderful accomplishment.

One of the first United States senators for Oregon after its admission as a state was Senator Delazon Smith from Linn county. One of the ablest newspaper men was Hon. Mark Brown of Linn county, Hon. Edgar B. Piper, the editor of the Oregonian and Hon. Benjamin F. Irvine, the editor of the Portland Journal are both Linn county boys. These newspapers rank as two of the leading papers in the United States and each of these editors have won a national fame. Also, President Templeton, the president of this Pioneer Association was a Linn county boy. When it is asked, "Where did Oregon find many of the famous men in her history?" the answer will be—"From the sturdy old stock of Linn county."

Honor the pioneers! Honor their accomplishments. Let us carry on the good work they commenced by keeping before us at all times the good of our wonderful state. If we have money to invest, let us invest it in the state. If we have goods to buy let us support our home industries. Let us minimize its disadvantages if we find any and do what we can to remedy them, quietly but effectively. Let us shout aloud of its advantages of climate, soil, produce and opportunities so that all the world may know that Oregon is a land flowing with milk and honey. We can increase the wealth and population of the state in the next 70 years in the same proportion as it has been increased in the past 70 years with only a small part of the effort and none of the hardships that our pioneer forefathers had to contend with. Let's Go!

The sun beats down with merciless heat
On the covered wagons below,
And the hearts of the party are panting to greet
The cool of a river's flow.
And onward they toil and strain and perspire
In a struggle to cross the plain,
And the sun's rays burn like a breath of fire.

At last down the valley the wagons roll
With the marks of the struggle appearing
And men and women are gathering round
With joy, and wildly cheering.
The jaded hearts of these pioneers
Are refreshed by this friendly greeting.
The men like men are behaving like boys,
The women, like women, are weeping.

And soon, the grindstones are grinding the grain
And the trees are falling fast,
And withox, hoes, and eager hands
Are building a home at last.
The fair green acres of Oregon land
Are ploughed and set to seed,
And out of nature's bounteous hand
Springs enough for every need.

These men and their sons and grandsons too
Developed the land space,
And credit for all that is good in this state
Must be given to their sturdy race.
We are flesh and bone of their bone,
And our love for our state must appear
By words and deeds for its betterment
Emulating the brave pioneer.

So when things don't run as smooth as they might,
If rain doesn't fall when it should,
(Continued on page 7)

Riggs Sued For \$35,685 Damages For Auto Smash

The largest damage action ever recorded here as the result of an automobile accident was filed today by Andrew B. Junor of Portland, former golf instructor at the Illihee Country club here, against Zadoc J. Riggs, prominent druggist of Salem, asking for \$35,000 in general damages and \$688.50 in special damages, including the value of the automobile.

I can furnish a policy that will protect you against such damage suits.

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