

# WILLAMETTE FARMER.

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## COOS COUNTY.

### Improvement of the Coquille River.

COOS COUNTY, OREGON,  
Dec. 30, 1875.

To the Honorable, the Senate, and House of Representatives, in Congress assembled:

We your Petitioners, citizens of the State of Oregon, respectfully pray your Honorable Body to appropriate the sum of \$100,000 for the improvement of the mouth of the Coquille River, in Coos county, Oregon; and, in this connection, we desire to call your especial attention to the following facts:

The Coquille river empties its waters into the Pacific ocean 15 miles south of Cape Arago, in Coos county. It drains a section of country of 900 square miles, almost every acre of which is covered with a dense growth of the finest timber in the world, consisting of maple, ash, alder, mezereon, live oak, yew, myrtle, white cedar, spruce, and that king of ship building timber, fir.

All this timber is accessible by the Coquille river, and its tributaries; but millions of feet are being destroyed yearly, by mountain fires, set accidentally, or more often to "burn over the range," for stock; and to clear land for agricultural purposes, the timber being valueless without a way of getting it to market.

The face of the country is diversified with valleys and low, rolling mountains, and the mountainous portion, (comprising perhaps one third of the land,) is almost a continuous coal field, and besides contains iron, gold, &c. This wealth of minerals can be put into boats on the Coquille river very easily and cheaply.

The same may be said of the timber, and it also proper to add that unless the river can be used as an outlet, the natural wealth of this region will lie dormant for generations to come; for the position is such that no other avenue of egress can be found which is not rendered impracticable by reason of the expense.

In such portions of the valley as are suited to agriculture, the soil is extremely rich, and produces enormously of every vegetable, fruit, or cereal usually raised in this latitude. No finer or better flavored fruits, no fatter or sweater beef, no butter more deserving the appellation of "gilt edged," no healthier sheep, producing superior wool or mutton, can be found in the United States.

For mildness and equability of climate, and health of the people, this valley stands unrivaled by any part of the Union. The mercury never goes down to zero in winter, or up to 100° in summer; the nights are always cool enough to be enjoyable, and sickness is so rare that the country cannot be said to have any "prevailing disease."

Springs of the purest and softest water gush from every hill, and run in every ravine, and there is scarcely a farm in the country but what is thus watered.

The Coquille river will average 150 yards wide for 30 miles from its mouth, and is navigable for that distance by vessels drawing 14 feet of water, and by light draught steamers for 20 miles more.

It is a most beautiful stream, having very much the appearance of a natural canal; deep, still, placid, its banks steep and overhung with wood, not a rock, shoal, rapid, or other obstruction to navigation save a few snags which can be easily removed, if necessary.

No obstacle exists, then, to the carrying of the immense wealth of this region (of which those who have never seen the forests of this coast can form no conception) out to the markets of the world except at the immediate mouth of the river. All else is clear and in a remarkably favorable condition.

But at the mouth the rocks are so disposed that only about one fourth of the water of the river can now be made available for purposes of navigation, the remainder running among rocks which act as a strainer, so to speak, and exclude all vessels.

At one point, vessels of 8 feet draught can enter safely, and a steam schooner of 58 tons register has run regularly, carrying lumber to San Francisco, for two years.

There is plenty of water, if the rocks were out of the way, to admit vessels of 16 feet draught. The average rise of the tide is 5½ feet.

According to the U. S. Coast Survey of 1861, whereof Com. Jas. Alden, U. S. N., was commander, and A. D. Bache, superintendent, the mouth of the river was a mile north of its present position, was ½ of a mile wide, ran straight out into the sea, with 9 feet of water on the bar at lowest tides, and no impediment to navigation existed. Now it is forced by the drifting sand against the northern side of the rock bound bluff, and

runs out through a rocky strainer.

What has been, can be again. A sea-wall one-fourth of a mile long, will not only turn the river into its former channel, but will so narrow and confine that channel, that deeper water than before can be readily secured. Or the rocks can be removed from the present channel, and deep water be had there.

In either case, millions of capital, hundreds of men, and dozens of vessels, will be immediately employed to secure, and carry out to market the available productions of this rich valley.

The condition of the mouth of this river has effectively prevented the development of the country heretofore, and caused it to remain in obscurity; but it has been attracting more attention within the last two or three years, and is rapidly settling up in consequence.

There are now on the river two saw mills, one of which has been shipping cedar lumber to San Francisco for two years at a fair profit. Another saw mill is building, and will be in operation by May. A tie is also building for the bar, and one, if not two vessels, to ply between here and San Francisco, will be built during the coming summer.

Business points, the model of future towns, are located; schools, post offices, &c., are in operation; and the embryo of a community of business importance to the country at large is now established in this wilderness.

Nothing has been done in coal except some prospecting. Nothing can be done without an outlet to sea; and the immense deposits of this mineral, and of iron as well, will be undiscovered in their mountain beds until the mouth of this river is improved.

One illustration will suffice to show the increase of population and business in this valley. A post office was established at Coquille, in this valley, in the year 1871. During that year, the value of stamps sold was \$10.17. During 1872, the value was \$44.18.—During 1873, the value was \$121.11. During 1875, the value was \$191.70.

All the post offices, schools, election records, &c., will show a corresponding ratio of increase. With a fair prospect of the mouth of the river being improved, the population and business of this valley will quadruple in a year.

Yet Maj. N. Michler, Corps of Engineers, U. S. A., in his report to Brig. Gen. A. A. Humphrey, dated Portland, Oregon, March 12th, 1874, says of this project:

"The most natural way to reach the waters of the Pacific ocean from the Coquille river, would be by passing out through its mouth. This would, of course, necessitate the improvement of the latter, which, from the character of the entrance, would prove a very difficult and expensive operation."

And yet Maj. Michler had never seen the mouth of the river in question, and knew nothing whatever of it from personal observation. Notwithstanding this fact, he proceeds to make a survey and estimates for the digging of a canal for small steamboats, (a mere ditch 30 feet wide and 4 feet deep at low tide,) to connect the waters of Coos Bay with those of the Coquille river, at a cost of \$349,592.76; when responsible parties could easily have been found, and can be found yet, who would have undertaken to improve the mouth of the river in a satisfactory manner for one third of the money.

The sources from which Maj. Michler obtained information regarding the mouth of this river, require notice, and we quote again from his report:

"No survey has as yet been made by this office to ascertain the nature and cost of such an undertaking, but, by an examination of the Coast Survey Pilot and Charts, and through information gained from other sources, a correct conclusion can be reached."

The Coast Survey of 1861, before mentioned, is certainly very far from justifying Maj. Michler in his "conclusions," and his "other sources" of information are believed to be individuals interested in "connecting the waters" of Coos Bay with those of the Coquille river, and their representations can be totally invalidated by dozens of human witnesses, and also by the mouth of the river itself.

Maj. Michler further says: "It is a very difficult entrance, and is seldom attempted." The Captain of the "Cordelia," who has run this bar successfully for two years, and many other seafaring men, acquainted with the entrance in question, will say that it is no more difficult (in fact it is better, the bar being short) than any other harbor on this coast, for the class of vessels adapted to its depth of water.

Again, he says: "A rocky reef extends across it, which at low water is almost bare. Through this an express to cut will have to be made to render it passable by sea-going vessels."

This reef is inside, and the writer of this

found twelve feet of water on it at low tide, when the river was at its lowest stage last summer.

"Almost bare," indeed!

Moreover, this reef is exactly in the place where a sea wall should be built to turn the river into its old channel, and will thus greatly facilitate the proposed improvement, by furnishing a most excellent foundation to build a wall on. Material of excellent quality and in unlimited quantity for a wall, is in, and on, the adjacent bluff.

After disposing of the question of the improvement of the mouth, Maj. Michler proceeds to comment on the river above, and treats the subject with even-handed justice, and the only apparent reasons for the unfavorable conclusions at which he arrived regarding the river's mouth, which can be entertained without seriously reflecting upon Maj. M., is, that he allowed himself to be nicely bungled by parties interested in the isthmus canal scheme.

Now, therefore your petitioners, who come before your Honorable Body by petition, asking aid to open this river, and let the pent-up wealth of this region flow out, respectfully ask that the river in question may have an equal share with other places claiming your attention; firm in the belief that our project will stand on its own merits, and praying that Government officers may not again hold to us the delusive phantom of promise to the ear, to break it to the hope.

Very respectfully, &c.,  
T. B. WILLARD,  
ALEX. SIMON,  
F. S. MATTESON,  
Committee of Arrangements, on the part of  
the people.

For the Willamette Farmer.  
Common-Sense View of Soils.

"ARCANA TERRESTRII."

[Written by request of several farmers.]

Chemical analysis of soils has not fulfilled the expectations of the friends of science. It would not do, however, to ignore the debt we owe to agricultural chemistry. While willing to admit that, chemically considered, there may be many constituents of our soils, absolutely necessary, which are yet in so small a degree distributed that no analysis, however minute, can detect; yet their presence is known by the growth of plants which will not grow without these seemingly absent constituents. For instance, our red hills, by analysis, show almost none—a mere trace—of silica, and yet we know, from common sense observation, that splendid wheat grows on these red hills.

Now, common sense teaches us that there is on the bran, husks, leaves, and stalks, a smooth, beautiful gloss, which stiffens and gives strength to all these, without which the stalks would never rise above the surface of the soil; besides, the bran would be of no protection to the kernel if soft, as it would be without silica acid. Hence we see the reason why wheat needs—must have—some sand in the soil on which it grows. Every farmer knows what he can grow on the following soils, and he knows them, too, at sight. A silicious, or sandy soil; an aluminous, or clay soil; an alluvial, or loamy soil; a calcareous, or limestone soil; a peaty, or beaver-dam lake, pond, marsh, &c.; such soil, when drained, contains a great quantity of humus, a carbonaceous, black mould.

Analysis of wheat shows, in the

	WHEAT.	STRAW.
Ashes of 1000 dry parts.	20	60
Silica.	16	654
Lime.	28	67
Magnesia.	120	33
Peroxide of iron.	7	13
Potash.	237	124
Soda.	91	2
Chlorine.	trace.	11
Sulphuric acid.	3	58
Phosphoric acid.	498	31

We cannot admit, in the full sense of the term, that this analysis represents the whole truth, but, if it is only an abridgment of the truth, it affords a better guide than no guide at all. Common experience teaches us that where fine grain grows there must be all, or nearly all, the simple and compound bodies necessary to fill the conditions needed. And, if, on a trial by analysis, the constituents in full are not found to be in the soil, and yet wheat of the best quality is raised on the soil—what is the conclusion? Does science err? Or, are the means used by the chemist equal to the emergency? To the last we give a negative. Then, it is the fault of the means used, and not of chemistry per se. This is the conclusion we must come to.

Now, while common sense may, in most cases, be correct, and chemical analysis, in many instances, incorrect, yet I ask what has

brought common sense up to its present exalted state? If common sense is a nucleus around which encircles all the arts, sciences, appliances, and experiments, has it not been built by the data furnished through their aid? Then, if these are factors in the ultimate datum, it will not do to leave them out, and thus place our "common-sense view of soils" within the narrow circle of simple experience on the farm. I love that plain, honest, common-sense view taken by the masses, for, founded in every day's experiments in life, it leads us not astray, but yields us a basis which is the realism in action. But, while I love this, I love something more. I love to take a broad and comprehensive view which covers, as near as may be, not only the realistic view, presented in ordinary business, but that clear mental illumination which, by induction and deduction, given through analysis and synthesis, fills the mind with both practical and theoretical views more complete, because more universal, and therefore more correct.

A practical view of any subject is always more or less imperfect.

Now, let us see what aid the chemist's analysis affords to our "common-sense view of soils."

We see from our table that, in the wheat, the heaviest ingredients are magnesia, potash, and phosphoric acid; the next are soda, lime, and silica; and the least peroxide of iron, sulphuric acid, and a trace of chlorine. We see the straw varies very much from this. This analysis, if of any value at all, shows to the farmer what there is in wheat and straw. He learns by this their value, and this knowledge is of use to him in two ways, as food for stock and man, and their importance, especially the straw, as a manure.

ALPHA.

and "reduction" of salaries, there would be no excitement worthy of note.

The meeting of the board of managers of the California State Agricultural Society occurred here day before yesterday, and was attended by numbers from all parts of the State. The old board and other officers were re-elected for the coming year, and all arrangements necessary were made for the coming annual exhibition of the Society in September.

The present prospects for extended travel toward the Centennial grounds are not the most flattering. Added to the determination of the C. P. and U. P. R. companies to make no reduction in fares for the occasion, the "blockade" for the winter is now chilling the minds of the people, and leaves patriotism, even in the State of California, at a low rate. Trains from the East have been from one to three days behind time for two weeks past, with prospects of a strong blockade.

The weather has been unusually stormy all over California for the last two months. The streets of Sacramento are in no better condition than the average Oregonian would expect in the city of Salem, and the farmers of California, on every hand, are beginning to ask, with some anxiety, What are we to do with such an abundant yield of grain? The crops here can only be injured by the "north wind." Speculators here, as a few years ago in the wool trade, have generally overrated the grain market, and as a result the honest farmers are again the victims of many tricksters. Almost one half the grain-dealers, on private account, in the State, will be losers for last season's operations, while many have entirely failed. Confidence has again been restored in banking circles. With a good harvest in 1876 and lighter taxation, California will be, I doubt not, once more on a sound financial basis.

Your occasional,  
J. V. B. SMITH.  
Sacramento, Jan. 29, 1876.

## Cereals for the Centennial.

EUGENE CITY, Feb. 1, 1876.  
ED. FARMER: I desire to give notice to all the farmers of Lane county, that the great and grand exhibition at the centennial is close at hand, and as I am appointed Commissioner for this county on cereals and grass seeds, I wish to inform through the WILLAMETTE FARMER, all those who wish to place on exhibition, wheat, corn, oats, barley, or grass seeds of any kind that they must be sure to have it down to Portland by the middle of February, as it is designed to send everything collected, off at that time. All articles designed for the Centennial, should be marked A. J. Dufur, Centennial Commissioner, Portland. They will be conveyed over the railroad free of charge. In sending cereals, say amount from a bushel down to a peck will answer; and on all samples sent, please mark the name of the producer, and name of the grain correctly on every sample, also the location, so there will be no misunderstanding. Now, farmers, don't be backward in this great enterprise, but let us show to the world that we farmers of Lane county are not afraid to compete against any nation with wheat raised in the Willamette valley. In every instance I have taken wheat from this county to the State Fair it has always taken the first premium; but I would recommend sending none but what is first rate, well filled, perfectly clean, sound, and bright. For any further information wanted please inform me.

GEORGE BELSHAW,  
Commissioner of Lane co. on Cereals.

## GRANGE ELECTIONS.

The officers elect of Oswego Grange, No. 175, for 1876, are: A. R. Shipley, M.; C. W. Bryant, O.; Wm. G. E. Shipley, L.; Joseph Stanger, S.; L. M. Davidson, A.; S. W. Corrigan, C.; Miss Mary Corrigan, T.; S. A. Durbin, Sec.; F. Ford, G. K.; Mrs. Mary Bryant, C.; Mrs. H. M. Lithby, P.; Mrs. F. Ford, F.; Miss Etta Corrigan, L. A. S.

At a regular meeting of Charly Grange, No. 75, held last Saturday in Dec. 1875, the following officers were elected to serve in the present session: J. O. Doutt, M.; J. Simmons, O.; Wm. Vaughn, L.; A. Danham, S.; J. B. Cochran, A.; G. S. Stanger, C.; A. E. Campbell, C.; J. E. Holt, T.; A. Wilkins, Sec.; Mrs. H. Miller, C.; Mrs. J. Simmons, F.; Mrs. A. B. Campbell, P.; Miss Lida Wilkins, L. A. S.

## Shall We Plant Hedges?

SUBLIMITY, Feb. 6th, 1876.  
ED. FARMER: A few of us in our neighborhood have been talking about hedging our farms, thinking it would be cheaper and much more durable than rail or pole fencing, provided we can get some hedge plant that will do well in this climate. How will the Orange Orange do here? Has it ever been tried, and, if so, with what success? Will some of your readers please give us their experience?

CHAS. F. EGERT.