

# WILLAMETTE FARMER

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## Correspondence.

### TRANSPORTATION MATTERS.

**Editor Willamette Farmer:**  
In this letter I propose to consider the public improvements required to reduce the cost of transportation and the advantages we may expect to result from those improvements to the farmers of Oregon and the Columbia river basin. The first in order, since we must consider Great Britain as our great market for our staple product, is the transportation between the Columbia river and Europe. This now amounts at this writing to about 63 cents per bushel. It is very high because of a temporary scarcity of vessels in the Pacific. If we now had the stimulus canal completed—the advantages of which I gave you in my last letter—such high rates between here and Europe would not be possible. San Francisco and the Columbia river could be supplied with steamers in thirty days which would carry the grain to Europe at ten cents per bushel less than now carried from San Francisco or Portland by sail vessels. Our grain and flour could at all times be carried from the Pacific Coast cheaper by steamer than around the Horn by sail vessels. And again, when there is a scarcity of crops in the Eastern States and Europe as at present, we could ship by steamer from San Francisco or the Columbia river as late as the first of May or June, and yet the steamer cargo would arrive in England before the next harvest. The Panama canal work is progressing finely, and its proprietors now feel confident that it will be completed in four years instead of six years, as first proposed.

In order that the cost of transportation may be further reduced, the Columbia river bar must be improved, by scouring or otherwise, so that the largest vessels may enter and depart safely and without delay. It may seem unnecessary for me to state that it is necessary for the vessel which carries the grain to enter the river in order to be loaded. We are not yet acquainted with any means by which vessels' cargoes can be loaded into them while the vessels are outside of the Columbia river bar cheaply and safely. If any such means were known the improvement of the bar would not be so important. But at present the size of vessels we can employ in carrying our grain is restricted to that which can cross the Columbia bar safely at high tide. This draft of vessels at present is twenty-three feet. This depth admits of large vessels, it is true, but not so large as we want in order to have our products carried to Europe the cheapest. We should have four to six feet more water on the bar to allow the deepest vessels which load at San Francisco to load in the Columbia river. The distance that is to be deepened on the bar is less than a mile and a half. Would it not be well to have the assistance of James B. Eads of St. Louis, who has achieved such a great success at the mouth of the Mississippi, in this important work.

From what is already written you may anticipate that I believe the improvement of the Columbia river above its mouth is of secondary importance. So I do, and because the barges that do not require any deeper water than we now have in the Columbia can carry our grain from Portland, Cascades or The Dalles to the mouth of the river to be put in the deep ships as cheap, if not cheaper, than large vessels can carry it by going up the Columbia for it.

Next, the improvement of the Cascades, or the construction of the locks there, is equal in importance to the improvement of the Columbia river bar. After the completion of the locks, grain and freight can be carried at one half of the present rates profitably from all points below and including The Dalles, and one half the work will be done for the relief of all the settlements along the Columbia river and its tributaries above.

To summarize, then, in my opinion our energies should be concentrated in obtaining the improvement of the Columbia bar, which will lessen the transportation on wheat, say seven to ten cents a bushel, on the average, and the completion of the locks and canal at the Cascades, which will lessen the cost of transportation some seven and a half cents per bushel on wheat, and many dollars per ton on other freight. The Isthmus canal is getting along well enough. It does not ask help nor subsidy, only to be let alone by our government. Yours,  
TRANSPORTATION STUDENT.

### Flax Culture in the Willamette Valley.

In spite of the natural richness of the soil in this State, which allows of the raising of successive grain crops for a much longer period than in other less favored states, it is nevertheless obvious that at some time or other the land must be farmed out, unless it

is in some way renewed. Consequently, of late, many experienced farmers have been advocating rotation of crops, by which means the land need never be idle, and better grain crops can be raised.

One of the best crops a farmer can put in the place of wheat or oats, and one of the most paying is, undoubtedly, flax. But all land is not suited to it, and the first consideration of the farmer should be, is the land he holds suitable to produce a profitable crop of flax. Land intended for flax must be in good condition, and clean. Here is where so many go wrong; they pick out the foulest and most useless pieces of land, and think that if they are of no use at all for anything else, they will put them in flax, and then they are surprised the crop they get off them does not pay. Besides putting it in foul land, some do not think worth while taking so much trouble in putting in a flax crop as a grain crop; we know of an instance of a farmer not taking the trouble to harrow in the seed. Such men as these will go round the country and say that flax growing does not pay any way, and that will open the farmers' eyes, by writing to the papers and showing them that such is a fact. Such men as these ought to be good authorities!

If flax is sown in clean land, well worked, it will pay twice as well as a good wheat crop. To prove, we will mention an instance:—A farmer put in an acre and a quarter of flax on the west side of the Willamette, at Albany; after the crop was harvested and scouted, the yield of lint amounted to 594 pounds, and in addition he had 9 bushels of seed. The West Coast Flax Mills, of Albany, undertook the rotting and scutching for half the lint, and bought the other half at 12 cents a pound. The seed was his own, and the only expense he was put to after the crop was in, was the pulling, which may be estimated at \$6.00 an acre, and the hauling 2½ miles to the ponds. His seed was worth \$13, and he got \$31.65 for his half of the lint, making together \$48.65 for an acre and a quarter of flax. Any farmer can do the same if he puts his crop in good, clean land, plows deep in the winter, and again light in the spring, and harrows well. Of course the land must be good;—white soil will not raise a good crop; sandy loam and rich bottomland are the best. The proper time for sowing flax is at the beginning of April; all flax should be in at the end of that month; on very sandy land it is better to put it in a little earlier in order to get the full benefit of the rains.

About one and one-fourth bushels should be sown to the acre. It is important that the land should be well pulverized before sowing. After the flax is about three inches high it should be well rolled, in order to pack the earth round the roots, and give the flax a firm bed.

When ready for pulling, the stock near the bottom will become a pale yellow, and the leaves will fall off about eight or ten inches from the ground, and the top seed balls will assume a slight brownish hue. If pulled too young, the fibre will be tender, and loss will occur in scutching; if allowed to ripen too much, the flax will be coarse and dry. China labor is always employed for pulling in this valley; it takes from five to six Chinamen to pull an acre in a day.

The most important process in the whole, and where the most judgment is required, is in rotting. The length of time the flax requires to be in the water, varies according to the temperature; in some instances it will be sufficiently rotted in five days, in others, it will take ten days. The water should be just as deep as the flax is tall. The flax is sunk by means of plank with rock on them. No water should be allowed to run through the ponds while the flax is in. Fermentation will set in immediately if the water is warm, which will cause the flax to rise and come to the surface if not sufficiently weighted. As soon as the fermentation subsides it will sink.

In order to find out if it is ready to take out, pull out a few spears and bend them gently over the fore-finger, and should the woody part separate freely from the fibre, and start up, it is time to take it out. It is well to leave the flax piled around the edge of the ponds for a day, after taking it out, to drain, as it can then be more easily handled.

It should be ready to bind up and haul away in three days from the time it is spread, if the weather is fine; if, however, the ground is damp, it is well to lift it and shock it, leaving sufficient time for the air to dry it thoroughly before hauling to the warehouse or scutch mill. There is no doubt that the soil and climate of Oregon, especially of the Willamette Valley, are particularly adapted to raising flax; any one must acknowledge this, who has seen samples of this year's crop, some of the spears measuring over five feet in length; and there is no doubt that before many years, flax will become one of the staple products of the Willamette Valley. J. M. H.

### The Whitman Monument.

WALLA WALLA, October 11, 1881.

**Editor Willamette Farmer:**  
Last Sunday, Oct. 7th, I spent at the old Mission station of Dr. Whitman. Nearly thirty-four years have passed since last I saw it, and time has wrought many changes, more especially in the river. I find land now where it was water then, and the channel that flowed near the house is now quite a distance back. I was able to trace the site of the different buildings and the grist mill, but find the old mill pond now covered with a forest, some of the trees measuring over four feet in circumference. The fine view which we used to have of the Blue Mountains is now completely hid by forest.

Uncle Charlie Swagale now owns the place, and he thinks that I must be mistaken in reference to the change in the river and the growth of the timber. But I showed him the very place where Dr. Whitman's child fell in and was drowned, which at that time had current enough to carry her half a mile below, where she was found lodged in the root of a fallen tree. Now, at this time a year, it is empty, with the exception of a small stream that can be stepped across, and the land where the water once flowed, is sowed to grass. I gathered apples from the doctor's trees, and cut a couple of canes from the limbs. Again, after the lapse of a generation, I stood in the grave yard, not as formerly, to gaze upon the forms of loved ones torn by the voracious wolves, but upon the mound where rest the remains of the thirteen victims of savage cruelty. Time has obliterated all traces of my sister's and Helen Mook's grave, and it was with difficulty that I found the grave of Alice Whitman. All is neglected; even the fence that at some time has been placed around the doctor's grave has gone to decay. What has become of the monument that was going to be put there? The lumber for the fence has been lying at the station for a year, and will soon be sold to pay for expenses. Mr. Swagale is willing to give the monument, but he says he is not going to wait to eternity for them to act.

Then, there is no way to get to the grave yard, and some steps must be taken to secure this way. I hope that this matter will be looked after. I find the people in this part of the country anxious to see the monument completed, and would all assist if they saw any prospect of its being done. There are some of the wheels of the doctor's grist mill and points from his plows, which are being kept by parties here, to place at the grave, in connection with the monument. I am now engaged in lecturing on the Whitman massacre.

C. S. PRINGLE.

**NOTES BY EDITOR.**—Mrs. Pringle was one of the children saved from the massacre, after the death of most of her family. Her maiden name was Sager.

### Letter from George Belshaw.

EUROPE CITY, October 13, 1881.

**Editor Willamette Farmer:**  
Please give notice that I accept the kind invitation of the Siuslaw Agricultural Society to deliver the Annual Address at their fair, which commences October 19, 1881.

If the weather remains favorable I shall exhibit, at their request, 12 bushels of wheat of different varieties, all white but one; about 50 different samples in glass, and nearly 100 varieties in the straw. I do not know what premiums are offered, and care little as I consider all premiums paid at fair amount to but very little to the exhibitors. The main benefit received by exhibitors, is that by bringing their productions, mechanical arts, grain, etc., and placing them side by side, the agriculturist may learn the difference in worth and cultivation of the different productions presented. The stock raiser will purchase better breeds of stock and improve his herds. I shall contend for the best sheaf of wheat, same of oats; and for the best display of grains grown by one man; best bushel of wheat of twelve varieties, and the best bushel of any kind as sweepstakes. I shall exhibit my wheat more particularly because of invitations from a number of emigrants lately arrived, who think of making their home in Lane county. I should like for wheat growers all over the county to compete with me for the best, of the most merit, and nearest perfection.

GEORGE BELSHAW.

We allude in our report of the Mechanics' Fair to the fine display of cereals made there by Mr. C. P. Burkhardt, of Albany, and we learn, since writing, that he was too unwell to be really able to box and send a full assortment from his collection, and another fact that should be noted is that Mr. Burkhardt has not been collecting grains from other farmers to make an exhibit of but that the samples shown are grown by himself, which adds materially to the merit due him in that connection.

### UNION COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

Notes by Our Special Report on the Grounds—Races, Etc.

LA GRANDE, Or., Oct. 17, 1881.

**Editor Willamette Farmer:**  
The ninth annual fair of the Union County Agricultural Society concluded Oct. 15th. At the start every indication was of a successful and pleasant fair. But, on Tuesday, it began snowing, and continued almost uninterruptedly until the close, and has snowed to-day. Everything was well arranged, and the programme was one of the best. In the speed programme there were some very excellent purses, and as a consequence, the finest lot of horses that ever came together in this upper country met there to contend. The display of draft horses was good, as well as of thoroughbreds. The cattle show was good, and prizes were hotly contested for by Messrs. O. P. Goodall and George Ames, both of whom have herds of excellent Durhams. Mr. Jno. Peach had on the grounds a full blood Jersey, which attracted universal attention and was much admired. There was a splendid exhibit of Berkshire, Magee, and graded hogs. Messrs. Childers and W. J. Snodgrass were the competitors for Berkshires, but Mr. Snodgrass took first premiums on all animals exhibited. Mr. Snodgrass has excellent breeds of Berkshires, Magees and Chester Whites, and imported them from the East at an expense of over \$1,200. The production of pork in this section is of considerable importance, and Mr. Snodgrass sees the necessity of improving by using the Berkshires, which are of acknowledged merit. Messrs. Ronald and Allen exhibited pens of sheep, and carried a good number of first premiums. A number of coops of poultry were on exhibition. The pavilion was well filled by the ladies' display, as well as the display of fruits and vegetables. In the ladies' department were good showings of cakes, pies, bread, jellies and needlework. On the wall hung a number of sketches, etchings and paintings. I was well pleased with those of Miss Holmes, especially her sketches from nature, and in one in particular of a pansy and daisy on a panel has rare merit. The exhibit of fruit was the best I ever looked at, and included many varieties. The only fault was the absence of peaches, plums and prunes. Apples do exceptionally well and mature well. The vegetable exhibit was comprehensive and worthy of a fuller mention. But space forbids.

The speed programme was well filled, and under the circumstances, (the track being very heavy) good time was made. The 50-mile race was hotly contested for by Messrs. C. Steers and Henry Green. Mr. Steers winning the race and first money in 1 hour and 59 minutes. The riders each had ten relay horses and rode each horse one mile. At no time during the race was Mr. Steers over one-third of a mile ahead. The entire race showed exceptionally good horsemanship. Mr. Steers was suffering from a sprained ankle, and had the misfortune to have one horse fall on him, and of being unseated by the starters, but finally won in the above named time, which is the best known.

I appended the premium list and speed trials, as they were taken off the books of the Secretary. I acknowledge courtesies from the Society. Wm. J. CLARKE.

### Wheat in Bulk

Now that we are assured of the certain completion of a railroad from Walla Walla to Portland before next harvest, and the probable completion within a year of a through railway connection with Puget Sound, the propriety of shipping Walla Walla wheat in bulk is being discussed. As the wheat business is now being carried on here, the producer or the buyer, or both, has to stand, not only the cost of freight sacks and twine up here, but the cost of repairing damaged sacks and a great deal of outlay for re-sacking the wheat which reaches Portland in torn and badly dirtied sacks. Then, too, it is held by those who should know, that it costs the producer more for labor to sack his wheat here than the same amount and kind of work can be done for at the shipping point. If the wheat were shipped in bulk from this country it could be emptied into the warehouses at Portland and Tacoma, cleared, sacked and loaded in A. I. order. By shipping wheat in this manner the appearance, if not the quality of the grain would be improved, and an increase in price, in excess of the cost of so doing, would follow. Walla Walla wheat is equal to any. But as some dirty lots find their way to market the price of all is decreased.—Walla Walla Union.

Dr. Glenn's crop in Upper California, this year, was only 100,000 sacks against 400,000 sacks last year. Of this year's crop the doctor will have to save 35,000 sacks for seed, so that he has only 65,000 sacks for market.

### Puyallup Hop Yards.

A correspondent of the Vancouver Independent gives the following interesting description: The town of Puyallup is situated about 40 miles from Tacoma. It is situated in a valley of great fertility. All the fruits of the temperate zone can be here raised in perfection, except peaches and grapes; also all sorts of vegetables. Indian corn is not a success here, on account of the cool and moist climate. But hops are grown in great perfection and profusion. Indeed, no soil or climate could be better for this product than is found here. Consequently a large portion of the country around Puyallup and also farther up the valley is devoted to the raising of hops; and this is the most important agricultural interest of the Puyallup valley. Very few persons realize the magnitude which the raising of hops in this valley has already attained. Among other extensive hop raisers is mentioned the name of Mr. Van Ogle, who has sixty acres of old hop ground, and who has added fourteen acres more this year, making seventy-four acres. He is said to have harvested an average of 1,500 pounds of hops per acre, and as hops have brought this year from fifteen to eighteen cents per pound, it follows that Mr. V. O. must have received \$250 per acre, of which more than one-half, perhaps two-thirds, is clear profit.

A passenger on the cars gave the following graphic sketch of the hop-picking time: "When the season for hop picking arrives," said he, "the canoes of the Indians look like small fleets on bay or river. About 2,000 persons are required to do the work of picking, and the Indians flock to the hop district from every quarter to get a chance to earn some money, and they consider this season as their harvest time, which it is in reality. Their mode of living has qualified them for the work of picking hops. They come to the hop yards with all their earthly possessions, including not only their squaws and papposes, but their dogs, cats and even hens and roosters. They pitch their tents within convenient distance of their work, and it is a sight to see the women carrying papposes on their backs, and the children doing all the work, while the noble warrior himself, disdaining labor, is not too proud to take the wages earned by them, and strut around with great dignity of manner, and condescends to drink or gamble away the earnings of the—let us say it in sober truth—better half of his bosom. But who could find fault? Is he not big Indian? Is he not 'nature's nobleman'?"

I am sorry that it is not in my power to give accurate statistical information concerning the hop culture of the Puyallup bottom. It is supposed that the hops exported from this valley bring in return not far from \$250,000, which would indicate that about fifteen or sixteen hundred acres are cultivated in this staple. The crop of this year is the largest ever gathered, and the quality superior. The climate is highly advantageous for this crop by reason of the cool atmosphere, the absence of hot, scorching sunshine and especially by the long time afforded to do the picking, as frosts rarely prevail before the middle of October.

### The Locks Necessary

A question which will sooner or later be a live one among the residents of Oregon and Washington is relating to free and uninterrupted navigation of the Columbia river from Kettle falls, near Colville, to Astoria. With all the due deference to any wise management of those who now hold a key to the granaries of Eastern Oregon and Washington, we must say that it will be a happy event when the last stroke is made which will give any man or set of men an opportunity to ship freight up or down the Columbia at rates which compensate fully for the service, and shall leave a surplus for producers over the cost of production. For this end it is highly necessary that the Cascade locks be brought to an early completion, and that work should be commenced at the Dalles. Every reasonable effort should be put forth by individuals both private and public to urge government appropriations ample to push this work rapidly forward. With this single issue are united the prosperity of thousands of people who live east of the Cascade mountains in Oregon, Idaho and Washington. The Columbia river cannot be opened to free and uninterrupted navigation without national aid. We have a right to expect this, as the great Columbia is a national highway; designed by nature as an outlet for a large and productive scope of country. But for a few miles along the Columbia is navigation interrupted. These few miles of obstructions ought to be overcome by the government in order to open the river to steamers, so as to benefit the population of a country 300 by 500 miles in extent.—Spokane Times.

We send out, on postal cards, statements of accounts to many subscribers, asking for renewals.

The time of year has come when farmers generally receive money for their crops and our subscriptions mostly fall due at this season. We hope that our friends will cheerfully and promptly comply with our request for renewals and show their good will by paying cash in advance, as we must hereafter insist on that principle of doing business.

Among the farmers of the North Pacific we venture to believe that no other journal has so many friends as the WILLAMETTE FARMER, which fact becomes evident whenever we go among the people; but as we cannot canvass in person, or procure competent and reliable persons to do so, we must depend, as heretofore, on the kind services of friends.

We hereby renew the offer we have made for years past, to send the WILLAMETTE FARMER, for one year, as a premium to any one who will procure us three cash subscribers who are not now on the list. Or we will allow in that proportion, four months' subscription for every \$2.50 sent for new names, and if any person wishes to work up a club in his or her vicinity of new names, they can write to us for terms, as we desire good canvassing done in all directions.

With the coming of better times we intend to work for increase of business, and as we have the pleasantest possible proof of the confidence and kind feeling entertained for the FARMER among the people, we believe our circulation, which is already large, can be greatly increased.

We shall use postal cards for all business with subscribers, because they are cheap and convenient, and were made for that purpose, and we shall take it for granted that no sensible man will consider it an offense to do so. We have heard of cases where people have been indignant at receiving a postal card through the mail, stating an account, but if there is any secrecy to the mail, it extends to postal cards as well as to letters.

### Spokane Products.

The Cheney Tribune says an interesting feature of the offices of the N. P. R. R. Co. at that place is the display made there of grain and vegetables of Eastern Washington, but more especially in the vicinity of Cheney in Spokane county. The magnificent bay window is filled in nicely arranged order with samples of grains and grasses from every part of the county and Eastern Washington, Spokane Falls being assigned a conspicuous place in the exhibition. On a table are a collection of vegetables raised near Cheney, and to one side a cabinet of curious and ornamental collection of natural productions of the country will be interesting to visitors. In the center of the room are a tier of shelves in circular shape, filled with regularly sized bottles of grains. All specimens are labeled with the name of contributor, when sown, when harvested, etc. The "Swamps" of Cheney contribute no small amount to the general display. A stuffed prairie chicken sits perched on one side of the window and a fine specimen of the jay bird occupies the other side, while on the walls above are deer's heads, also a fine looking buffalo head. To the ladies of Cheney belongs a large portion of credit in arranging the grasses and grains as also the general ornamental work of the office.

The height of the world's atmosphere, according to the result arrived at by M. L. Lander with his various investigations, is 22,000 miles, instead of 250, as previously named. He corroborates this calculation by showing that the height at which meteoric matter becomes incandescent, on approaching the earth, is far beyond the distance heretofore assigned to it, and therefore there must be an atmosphere of that greater distance, to produce the incandescence. He also accounts for the spectrum of the aurora borealis, showing a marked coincidence with that of the zodiacal light, by the theory that, since the earth travels in the zodiacal nebula from September to May, the rarified atmosphere beyond the earth's heavy envelope of air must absorb some of the constituent elements of the zodiacal nebula, and thus these elements make their presence apparent in the spectrum of the aurora, which phenomenon occurs in the rarified outer envelope.

CONSIDERABLE inquiry has been made recently in reference to the workings of that "Northwestern Marriage Company." It is a big thing when you come to understand it. Suppose an unmarried lady or gentleman takes out a \$10,000 policy, at say \$60 premium, and marries after six months or within twelve months from the date of the policy, he or she will be entitled to receive one-fourth of the amount of the policy, viz: \$2,500, which would be quite a pretty sum with which to commence housekeeping. If marriage is postponed to the second year, the party would receive one-half; and if postponed to three years, three-fourths.