

# WILLAMETTE FARMER.

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## OREGON PIONEER HISTORY.

SKETCHES OF EARLY DAYS.—MEN AND TIMES IN THE FORTIES.

BY S. A. CLARKE.

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NUMBER XVI.

### FUR COMPANY METHODS.

The early history of the fur companies is a record of bad management and bloody acts. Sometimes the whites incited savage vengeance by reckless acts on their part, but the time finally came, under Dr. McLoughlin's administration, when a politic course was established and the influence of the Hudson's Bay Company was supreme over the whole region. In the spring the business of trapping was given over. The furs were best in the winter season. Then nature had clothed its myriad of wild-wood wards with their warmest covering, and the furs that human comfort and fashion made a market for by coveting, had their longest, finest and strongest fiber. Spring is the time when all fur bearing creatures shed off their winter garments and take on a lighter growth, suited to the season. That, too, was the time when the employes of the fur company gathered their year's stock of peltry and carried them to headquarters. There was art and skill in the management of this business, and advancement in the service depended on the ability shown to conduct business wisely. Judging of the value of furs was a fine art, and caring for them, bailing and packing them and getting them safely to Vancouver was important. So when winter was over, the distant hunters and trappers brought in their stock to the chief of their districts, who carefully examined and baled them in convention packages for transportation. We can suppose that over the wide territory that the trapper or hunter roamed a universal movement was made towards the local centers. Each man when he made his report to his support, also gave a statement of the goods and supplies he would individually require for the year to come. The agent in charge then sent down a runner to carry word to headquarters of his doings in general, and sent also, the requisitions of all the employes in his district for the coming year. He also forwarded his personal requisition for individual requirements, and an order for such supplies as he expected to make use of in trading for furs during the coming year. It was a case of giving to them that have, and taking away from those that have nothing, for the chief factor at Vancouver made the supplies sent correspond to the business done, and not to the wishes or views of the agent. Success was the criterion. The successful agent received a full supply of goods, and vice versa.

At Vancouver they were busy for months putting up the various requisitions that came from a region a thousand miles square. There was an account kept with every man employed, and no supplies were sent at any other time than when the summer brigades went home. Each man's order was carefully put up and sewed in a wrapper ready to go back when the time came. All supplies for different posts were packed and invoiced to them. By this time the brigades came down the river and their was plenty of other work to be done. Such perfect system prevailed that no mistakes could happen.

Colville was an important post and was the upper station on the Columbia. At that point the batteaux were built. Skilled workmen were employed building these boats. They were "clinker built," so as to mount a wave instead of diving into it. This made it possible to descend a rapid and not be sucked into its vortex. These boats were sawed out by hand just in the desired shape. They were made of excellent yellow pine and

were very serviceable. These men built ten or twelve batteaux every year, and they were always ready when the summer brigade wanted to start. It was usual to time this expedition to suit the early rising of the Columbia. By June the great river would be booming. Then the pack-loads of valuable furs would arrive from the northern posts. There were several districts far away on the Fraser, in New Caledonia and at Thompson's river. When all the goods were packed and ready at Colville the fleet of batteaux started down stream. The occasion was one of life and jollity. The crews were voyageurs from Canada. Besides Canadians and half-breeds there would be stalwart Iroquois Indians from Canada also, strong fellows who were thoroughly at home in swift rapids. These men were used as bowsmen. They stood in the bow, paddle in hand, to ward off from dangerous objects and by signals given they made the steersman know how to guide the boat. It was a striking sight to see this fleet of boats with its outre navigators at helm and bow, starting down some swift rapid. The tawny-skinned bowman—an Iroquois—stripped to the waist and bare-headed, with long back hair streaming behind, built like an athlete and every muscle strained, dashes his oar in on this side or the other to give the boat clear headway through the boiling floods.

At the mouth of the Okanagan river they laid in a great part of their cargo. Here the pack trains came in from the northern districts, which were rich in fur bearing animals. At the mouth of Walla Walla river was Fort Walla Walla, to which came heavy shipments from Snake river, as well as from the Snake Indian country far south. By this time their loads were nearly complete, and from their down it was a home stretch. The boldest Iroquois bowsmen would not dare to pass the swift and narrow Dalles. There they made portages to insure safety. Also for a sort distance at the Cascades they made a portage; but many of the swift rapids they shot with arrowy speed, their adroit bowsmen and steersmen being nerved to the work. Once below the Cascades it was but a few hours run to Vancouver. The whole brigade was alive to the fact that the prime moment of the whole year was upon them. Everything was put in order, and when headquarters finally came in sight they plumed themselves for the supreme event of their arrival. Forming one broad front they kept in perfect line, and bending to their oars, sent their Canadian boat song chorus over the watery way to announce their coming. They fired guns and shouted wild huzzas and the chorus of their song grew to a wilder harmony.

On shore, when they saw the fleet of batteaux coming, the shout went up, "The Summer Brigade! The Summer Brigade!" From the flag-staff the gorgeous ensign of St. George soon floated, and the great guns in the bastions roared out their noisiest welcome. If there was any vessel in the river at that time, it joined in the general jubilee; flags were hoisted and cannons roared whenever possible. All recognized that this was the greatest event of all the year; the fruition of many hopes, for this convoy brought home the total product of the year gone by. Over all the wide interior mountain ranges, and all the beaver-haunted streams mountain men and Indians had braved fate and the elements to gather these spoils for fashion's use. That was all the use civilization then had for a region that has since proved very rich in precious ores; that is furnishing bread for the old world millions; where flocks and herds, worth uncounted millions, replace the buffalo and elk and deer, and homes of a million people will soon make the wilderness forgotten and leave no trace of the dusky tribes that then possessed it.

A half century has scarce gone, and

now we are trying to save a record of the brave and hardy men and the noble women who first occupied and laid the foundation for American rule. Already the past has grown historic and the pioneer must be rescued from oblivion.

The June arrival of the summer brigade brought together all the chief agents of the Hudson's Bay Company. They came down with their goods and were on board the batteaux as all the throng from the port came down to welcome them. It was in a certain sense a holiday, but no sense of jollity ever came between Dr. McLoughlin and business. The welcome was full and hearty, but as friend met friend and hand grasped hand and greetings were interchanged, the bales were rapidly put ashore and carried to the store house not far away. It was only when this work was done and every package was accounted for as invoiced and safely stored, that the pint of liquor was poured out at the "depot" to the brave voyageurs, and they became "as jolly as lords." There was no chance taken that should become so besore the work was all done.

And now commenced the pleasant hours that still leave such cheerful associations in the minds of all those who survive of that remarkable set of men who composed the officials of the Hudson's Bay Company. They were usually highly educated and accomplished, and often as brilliant as well. Some of these gentlemen were remarkable as conversationalists, and very few of them could be called merely plain and ordinary business men. It is said that J. G. Campbell and Hiram Clark brought letters of introduction from Captain Fremont to Dr. McLoughlin, and were entertained very pleasantly at Fort Vancouver in consequence. They came as far as Whitman's with Fremont, and as they were coming down to Western Oregon he gave them an introduction to Dr. McLoughlin, who showed them all kindness and hospitality, and sent them to the falls of the Willamette in a batteaux. Both Campbell and Clark were accomplished gentlemen, and they have often expressed surprise that men of such fine education and true breeding could be found to live in such a wilderness.

What a joyous time there must have been when that coterie of wit and earnestness came together for those weeks at Vancouver. How as one another told the story of his years' experiences, and at times humor gave way to pathos as the recital was of some tragic or pathetic deed, of which the early epoch knew so many. Let us take a brief glance at the principal ones in a short review, only wishing that some writer with a better store of facts could be found to do justice to the theme.

Dr. McLoughlin had great system in all business matters, but outside of business, where his great qualities earned such sure success, McLoughlin was a most enjoyable man. All things went better for his being near and his presence insured cheerfulness and humor. He was finely educated and that increased his capacity for conferring pleasure. All who were in his society were charmed with the genial flow of wit and humor, his pleasant manner, and his kind interest in their fortunes. He seemed to identify himself with them, and gave all who came to him excellent and reliable information and advice. Withal he was a very devout Catholic, and no one can question the sincerity of his belief. He had a rather comical way of using mild profanity and then interrupting with self condemnation, would beg God's forgiveness before the words were cold, making the sign of the cross on his bread-basket in a laughable way, yet with all possible sincerity. With such a man as leader, dullness could never thrive.

Every year Governor Simpson used to come over from London to attend a

great council at Red River, to which were gathered a congress of all the official heads of the Hudson Bay company. It was a time of great feasting and jollity as well as of business importance. Dr. McLoughlin could not go, but usually sent some one to represent him and the department he ruled.

Up to the time our settlers organized a provisional government there was no other rule here in the Pacific far west than the arbitrary regulations of that company. Dr. McLoughlin was the autocrat of all the Pacific Northwest, and there was no law but his word. What an opportunity, that, for one man to be a tyrant; yet there is no evidence that in all the years he was chief factor that he ever exceeded rightful and legitimate discipline.

As the heads of the department gathered at Red River, so those in charge of districts came together every summer at Vancouver. The men we have named and perhaps others, were assembled with their year's collection of peltries and furs to settle for one campaign and plan for another.

We have shown what sort of men they were, how accomplished and capable, how full of kindness and humor, and who can doubt that their annual meetings were a delightful exchange from the dull commonplace of duty on the far outskirts to companionship full of life and spirit. As time went on, these men became more united and friendly, for they remained here, receiving deserved promotion for many a year. Dr. McLoughlin was at the head of affairs for twenty years, and all that time his word was supreme. There was serious complaint made against him but not for official neglect. It was that he was too friendly to American emigration. His great kindness to Americans was urged against him as an error, if not a crime, and was the final cause of his resignation from the Hudson Bay service.

### Southwestern Oregon as an Inviting Field For Immigration.

WILDERVILLE, Or., April 24, 1886.  
Editor Willamette Farmer:

Knowing that you take much interest in the welfare of the immigrant and desire to aid in locating in a pleasant and desirable part of this great and noble State, I would call your, and others attention to Southwestern Oregon, in Josephine county, as an inviting field in which to secure cheap farms, and also inducements for settlers to locate government land in this immediate vicinity. Hoping to have the pleasure in assisting strangers to locate among us, I will freely give my time in so aiding them.

M. S. DEAN.

### To Remove Moss from Trees, Etc.

DEXTER, April 20, 1886.

Editor Willamette Farmer:  
In the FARMER of April 9th, you ask some questions which I will try to answer: I keep the moss off the fruit trees by whitewashing with unslacked lime.

To prevent squirrels, mice and gophers from eating corn, I soak the seed, nearly or quite to the sprouting point in a solution of copperas. I have plenty of seed corn which is well cultivated, (white), and shall try a new early yellow variety. Yours Truly,

S. M. P.

### MARION COUNTY POMONA GRANGE

Marion County Pomona Grange meets at Jefferson, in Chehalis Grange hall, on Friday, May 7th, at 11 o'clock A. M. All 4th degree members of the order are cordially invited to attend, and the representatives of the subordinate Granges are earnestly solicited to be present.  
Secretary.

Those who have used the BOSS ZINC and LEATHER COLLAR PADS and ANKLE BOOTS say they are the best and cheapest, because most durable. They will last a life time. Sold by Harness makers on 60 days' trial. DEXTER CURTIS, Madison, Wis.

### SPRING OUTLOOK.

Under this head the Springfield, Mass. Republican of a recent date says:

The situation in regard to breadstuffs has become somewhat interesting on account of the March statement of the department of agriculture. On last Thursday, for instance, the New York Commercial Bulletin showed that as we had exported but 46,080,000 bushels of wheat, including flour, in seven months, we should probably carry over after July 1, over 80,000,000 bushels of the last very short crop. The estimate of the government statistician was made public the same morning,—namely, that the farmers now hold 30 per cent. of the wheat crop, that is, 107,000,000 bushels; add to this the visible supply in store March 1, 52,000,000, and the country has 159,000,000 bushels of wheat to live on till next August. The consumption of the country is estimated at 24,000,000 a month, amounting in five months to 120,000,000 bushels; spring wheat seed will require about 15,000,000, leaving less than 25,000,000 bushels for export and for margin.

This would be an unprecedented situation, for the country never carries over from crop to crop less than 38,000,000 bushels, which was the margin in 1882, when wheat was held at \$1.42 at the close of the season, and in the face of a large crop. The exports from Atlantic ports alone during February were 3,766,000 bushels, or not quite a million a week. They have been only a million in two weeks in March.

The bull statement of the case is that the county will be bare of wheat to a wholly unprecedented degree before August 1st. This view seems to have impressed the British markets, as London and Liverpool have responded to an advance on this side the past week, for the first time since this crop was harvested. The British average price for the week ending February 20, was 29 shillings four pence, the lowest ever recorded. But even with the abundant native supply, the British requirement from foreign sources has averaged 1,000,000 bushels a week, for 25 weeks. There is one fact which should moderate American expectations, and that is, that a great country is difficult to exhaust on the home stretch. But even adding a liberal percent to the official estimate of the present total supply of the country, it would seem unavoidable that wheat should rule considerably higher in the next few months.

Foreign advices of the Russian supply are that it is very short. The present American visible supply is declining, and does not very much from that of a year ago, when the same ports are included. At the present time according to the government statistician, we have just about sold and eaten the entire last year's crop, and are now read to attack the surplus left over from the crop of 1884.

Geo. Starrett's Walla Walla garden, flower, grass, tree, and hedge seeds are pre-eminently the best for this section. A point not often thought of, but which is important to the planter, is that seeds grown in a northern climate have more vigor, and more certain to produce a crop, and mature earlier than those raised further south; this, only an opinion at first by some leading agriculturist, has of recent years been thoroughly established as a fact, and acknowledged now as the rule in all classes of seeds. Mr. Starrett guarantees that all vegetable seeds sold by him are fresh and true to name, and grown from the choicest selection of vegetables.

In Salem these seeds are sold by Squire Farrar & Co., Keller & Sons, Jno. Hughes, Weller Bros., Roth & Rupp, W. L. Wade, Al. Buckingham, Gilbert & Patterson, and J. M. Martin & Co.

John G. Wright is the general agent for western Oregon and Washington territory; and full dealers should address him for supplies. He retails them at his pioneer grocery store, in Salem.

We want 100,000 pounds of wool, Wm. Brown & Co., dealers in Boots and Shoes and Leather. The highest price paid for hides, pelts and furs, 231 Commercial street, Salem, Oregon.

### We Tell You Positively

that Simmons Liver Regulator will rid you of dyspepsia, purify your system, enable you to sleep well, prevent malarial disease and give you a brisk and vigorous feeling. It acts directly on the liver and kidneys, cleansing, purifying, invigorating and fortifying the system against disease. It will break up chills and fever and prevent their return, and is a complete antidote to all malarial poison—yet entirely free from calomel or quinine.