

WILLAMETTE FARMER.

OREGON PIONEER HISTORY.

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

BY S. A. CLARKE.

Pioneer Steamboating—Recollections of a Man Who Ran on One of the First Vessels.

(Concluded from last week.)

The first car track over the portage was made in 1851. It was two feet wide, with four-inch fir scantling for rails. The cars were hauled by mules; had wooden wheels made of fir planks, and with wooden axles. In fact, there was no iron in the construction of either cars or road, except the nails used. The steamer Bell ran from Portland to the Lower Cascades, to connect with the portage railroad, and the steamer Mary ran above The Dalles. A staunch-built schooner took the freight from the Bell to the middle landing, when the wind was up stream, which was usually the case for six months, from October to April. When the wind was down stream the Cascade Indians were employed to tow the schooner. Any number of them were usually obtainable at short notice. The railroad terminus was below the big eddy, where the Hudson Bay men had always hauled out their boats. The place was known to old navigators as Cleutchman's rock. With a fair wind the schooner would sail up in a few hours, but with wind and weather unfavorable one or two days were required to cordell up to the landing, requiring the services of thirty to forty Indians. That was why freight was \$80 a ton from Portland to The Dalles in early days.

Sometimes the Indians would be drunk, or mad, and could not be had on any terms for a week at a time. At such times freight had to lie over until a crew could be procured. Passengers usually walked the five miles from the Lower to the Upper Cascades; at other times they were taken in wagons, at the reasonable charge of \$2 for the trip. A five miles' walk was not much of an effort in those days for men or women. When passengers left Portland they did not know when they would get to The Dalles. I have known the steamer Bell to be for days at Cottonwood Point, afraid to pass by Cape Horn in bad weather. Then one day, and often more, would be taken to make the portage. Another day took them through to The Dalles, in most cases, but it might require three if the middle river was very strong. The expense of a trip to The Dalles in those days was seldom less than \$20. Passengers on those tedious trips generally passed their time with cards. All were on an equality, and to make up a game you would often find an army officer, a government employe, merchant, mountaineer, prospector, day laborer or deck-hand. Times were free and easy, and so were the people; all the beauty of social equality was illustrated on the old-time journeys up and down the Columbia. Usually games were played "for fun," drinks or cigars being paid for by the loser. But in those times, when money was easy got and abundant, men often made such travel interesting with games that made coin change hands and caused excitement to all on board. Grouped about the card table would be an eager mass of lookers-on, whose interest and absorption was equal to that of the principals in the games themselves. These gamblers would pile up the "slugs" or twenties and smoke their cigars with all imaginable indifference. Gaming was a high art, and unless a man was an artist he had no right to be in a game.

In those days women were scarce, and men were rough as a consequence. The women who traveled were often of a class as free and easy as the times, and their presence was no restraint. Men played for money then who no doubt

now look back and wonder that they did so. This a topic of interest, and it is a pity that no historian is at hand to record the many incidents of early travel on the great river of the west, and relate for future times the story of earlier ones. There is romance and wild interest in this subject that a ready writer could charmingly illustrate if he could properly possess the facts.

Another feature of those early times was the prevalence of gold and the little fear a traveler entertained of losing his lucre. The miner would have his dust in a buckskin bag, and roll it up with his blankets. When he came aboard the boat one and another threw their blankets in a pile, and went about with no fear that some marauding thief would get away with it. Skilled thievery is a product of civilization, "an outgrowth of society," and had not found enough of these inspiring causes on the Columbia river to induce its presence here early in the fifties. That other product of civilization, the tramp, was unknown here at that time. There is hardly an instance known where losses occurred on the little steamer that carried the traffic of those days. Travelers by land and by water handled their gold dust or coin with a freedom and confidence in common honesty that spoke well for the times and the human nature that was peculiar to them.

At the lower Cascades we stopped over night with Mr. Hamilton, a kind-hearted man of the pioneer era; his wife being of the same material—perhaps a little more so. A Mr. Griswold kept a house at the middle landing. Every man carried a roll of blankets for his bedding, and every woman as well. At the upper landing hotels were kept by Bush and the Bradfords. Their tables were supplied with "the best the market afforded," which meant salt pork that came round "the Horn," and salmon that was trying to climb the swift water at the Cascades. Potatoes grew thereabouts, and were always worth \$1 to \$2 a bushel. The land from the upper to the lower Cascades was all claimed by the speculative settlers in 1850 and '51. The title of the upper Cascades claim was contested for many years, and finally was won by the Bradford side. Bush was defeated after a long and angry strife, that cost each side a great deal of money.

In the winter of 1855 the Bradfords constructed another wooden railroad, stronger and better than the first, and standard gauge. Gold has been discovered in the Similkameen country and on the upper Columbia. Owing to this discovery, and the Indian war that followed, travel and business had increased beyond the facilities of transportation at the Cascades. That was the first gold discovery east of the Cascade range, and the first prospectors were from Salem. Louis Westcott was one of the first discoverers. The first season after this discovery the two men, Jo Dailey and Giles, cleared \$60,000 passing freight over the little two-foot gauge road. About the time Col. Ruckles began a wagon road on the Oregon side, and when finished the little Wasco moved its landing to that side and worked in conjunction with the steamer Fashion. These two lines had all the freight they could carry, and besides had full passenger lists.

Col. Ruckles had no capital when he commenced work on his portage enterprise, but he afterwards enlisted a Mr. Olmstead. In 1858 they commenced the construction of a wooden track for a trolley on the Oregon side of the Cascades. This they put through to the middle landing, and could hold the other company level in work. Freight had been \$80 per ton, and passage \$10 to The Dalles, but it now decreased to \$40 and \$5. Ruckles & Co. completed the first through track to the Lower Cascades, now known as Bonneville;

distance five miles, and in 1864 placed the first iron horse on the track, which was the first locomotive in Oregon. The locomotive only ran two and a half miles, where the road was substantially built. Over the other half of the way the cars were hauled by mules. In '64 they kept one hundred men employed to pass freight over this road. The Bradford road had, meanwhile, become so worn out that they hired Ruckles & Co. to pass their freight over that road while they were rebuilding their own track and laying iron rails on it from the Upper to the Lower Cascades. It was about the this time the two companies consolidated.

In those years we had many social gatherings at Col. Ruckle's where wood-choppers were the elite. Freight now went back to the north side, and the south side or Oregon road went to decay.

Weekly Crop Report.

CHICAGO, July 17.—The following crop summary will be printed in this week's edition of the Farmer's Review: Drought throughout the Northwestern states is injured all crops more or less. Corn, although not materially damaged so far, is commencing to show the effects of the dry season, and must suffer considerably if rain does not fall soon and in sufficient quantity. As a result of the drought the oat crop is ripening too fast and will hardly make three-quarters of an average crop if the drought continues. Estimates of the average yield of winter wheat in the different states are as follows: Sixteen counties in Illinois fifteen bushels. This is a falling off of two bushels as compared with our report of last week. Morgan county reports a yield as high as twenty-five bushels, and Pope as low as eight bushels. Twelve counties in Indiana give an average of fifteen bushels per acre. Four Kansas counties report a yield of seventeen bushels, but others report returns as light to very poor. For the whole state the yield is undoubtedly poor. Four counties in Kentucky give eleven bushels. Three Michigan counties give thirteen bushels. Eleven counties in Missouri report an average yield of nineteen and one-half bushels. Our Ohio reports indicate a fair to good yield of wheat, but figures are not given. Reports from Wisconsin place the yield from fourteen to twenty bushels per acre.

Reports on the condition of spring wheat are as follows: Nineteen counties in Iowa place the average at 72 per cent. Carroll, Cass, Clayton, Howard, Iowa, Keokuk and Madison counties cannot state an average, the crop being almost totally destroyed by insects. Eleven counties in Minnesota place the condition at 71 per cent. Twelve counties in Nebraska report an average condition of 84 per cent, and seven counties in Dakota 89 per cent.

Cheap Paint and Good Whitewash.

Essex: In reply to your inquiry for some cheap material with which to cover an old barn whose boards are so weatherbeaten as to be unfit for paint, we recommended the following: Skim-milk 2 qts, fresh slacked lime 8 oz, linseed oil 6 oz, white Bugundy pitch 2 oz, spanish white 3 lbs. The lime is to be slaked in water exposed to the air and then mixed with about one-fourth of the milk, the oil in which the pitch is dissolved to be added a little at a time, then the rest of the milk, and afterwards the spanish white. This will do for 25 yards of two coats and will produce white. If desirable, color can be made with various substances.

The following recipe for whitewash is excellent: Add to one peck of white stove lime while it is slaking, 1 lb of tallow and 2 qts of strong rock salt brine. Thin to a proper consistency and apply with a whitewash brush. The tallow repels moisture and the salt hardens the lime. Colors may be produced by adding common pigments. Again, take one part of fine sand, two parts of wood ashes, three parts of slacked lime, sift through a fine sieve or screen, mix well and stir with linseed oil to the consistency of paint. Add a little lamp black to the color if wanted. This is a very cheap and desirable paint and equally good on wood or brick, being fire proof. Apply as other paints are applied.

Correspondence.

About Fruit Evaporators.

SALEM OR., July 20, 1887.

Editor Willamette Farmer: Having seen a good many references lately to the large evaporator to be constructed in the town. That it is to be of great benefit to the town, to employ seventy-five or eighty hands; give a market for all the surplus fruit etc., and having heard the systems spoken of, as possessing unusual merit. I have taken the trouble to investigate to see whether we are likely to receive all the benefit from this concern that we are promised (on paper). Now one word in reference to the motive of this article. I have no fight to make on any legitimate enterprise, no matter where it hails from, and wish all to succeed who are entitled to, and further believe in any enterprise to either succeed or fail upon its merits. I have been a resident of this town for upwards of two decades, and I can truly say that I am desirous for the success of any enterprise that will advance the best interests of the town. But to return to the evaporator. I find by a close perusal of Trescott & Co.'s pamphlet taken together with the cuts given of the machine that it very closely resembles the old Alden process; in fact were it not bought from under another name any one conversant with the Alden Dryer would say at once that it was the Alden process. Now as the Trescott Co. have used the main principles of the Alden Dryer let us see what has been done in Oregon with them. There has been establishments put up at McMinnville, Oregon City, Salem, Monmouth, Eugene City, and one I believe over in Coos county. I have yet to learn that they (any of them) were ever a dollars profit to their owners; while to take the Salem establishment, I have it from the owner direct that it cost him \$9,000 to learn that it cost him more to dry fruit on the Alden Dryer than he could afford to sell it for. Now what assurance have we that the Trescott Co. using the same principles in their machines will have any better success. The trouble was not with the Alden fruit for it stands high in the markets even now and they made a No. 1 quality of fruit. But it cost too much to operate the dryer. I am told this new concern proposes to bleach all their fruit and put up nothing but a strictly first-class article packed in good shape; right here I wish to say that I think the pernicious practice of bleaching fruit, has done more to injure the dried fruit business in Oregon than all other causes combined. As it destroys the natural flavor of the fruit; with unbleached fruit one can easily tell the variety right along, while with the bleached article, this is impossible, and it also enables the Commission men to turn off for No. 1 fruit, that which will not give satisfaction. I hold that it is impossible to improve on the natural flavor, and whenever you destroy that natural flavor (as is always done to a greater or less extent by bleaching)—you injure the fruit just to that extent. Again, I am told by the stockholders of this company, that they have an extensive acquaintance of the requirements of the fruit markets of the East, and will be able to dispose of their goods to advantage. If this is the case, I do not see why they devote so much space in their pamphlet to advertising commission houses. Under the head of "Suggestions" they get off the following:

"We would suggest to those who contemplate shipping their own fruit to, by all means, ship to a reliable commission house, and not down the market yourselves, for, by so doing, it has a tendency to weaken trade. In the long run, it is better to select a reliable house and stick to it." As the commission men have the

fruit growers of Oregon, in their clutches, I think it far better for them to run a house of their own where the fruit can be sold on its merits, so that those who have good fruit can sell it for its true value. I think the possibilities of the fruit business in Oregon can scarcely be realized, but it must be worked up on solid principles. The day is past in Oregon, when the Alden Fruit Dryer or any other operating, on the same principle, can be made a success financially. I remember having seen some of the so-called choice bleached Alden fruit, in a Portland commission house, in June 1886, which were sold at four and a half or five cents per pound, and it was all boxed up and rated No. 1. We have had two seasons with such prices ruling, and I attribute the same mostly to the bleached fruit and the commission men. Hoping to see the time in Oregon, when Dryers and fruit can be sold on their merits. I am respectfully yours,

RUSTICUS.

The Year's Production of Gold.

NEW YORK, July 18.—The World, in an editorial to-day, says: "The report of the director of the mint will be about the most interesting and instructive document to be issued from the government printing office this year. It shows that the total production of gold in the United States last year was \$34,869,000, an increase of \$3,068,000 over that of the previous year, so that instead of exhausting our mines, as some experts predicted would be the case soon, we are actually increasing our production of precious metals. California, the pioneer, not content with having come to the front as a grower of grain and fruit, still leads all States in her yield of gold, being credited last year with \$19,720,000. Colorado furnishes \$4,450,000; Montana, \$4,425,000; Nevada, \$3,000,000; Dakota, \$2,700,000; Idaho, \$1,800,000, and Arizona \$1,110,000. Alaska produced \$446,000 last year, against \$300,000 in 1885, so that if she keeps adding to her gold product at this rate she will soon have paid for herself. Georgia, New Mexico, the Carolinas, Oregon, Utah and Washington aggregated \$11,227,500.

American Magazine for 1887.

This worthy publication is again with us and we are more pleased than before with it. The character of the matter it contains and the excellence of its illustrations are much improved over the first number. The following authors contribute to the August number; Dr. W. F. Hutchinson, an article on Venezuela, H. Edgar Fawcett's, serial story is continued; Julian Hawthorne, in "Village Types," contributes sketches of typical character, such as almost any American village can produce, Mr. J. Hawthorne does good service by embalming them before they go away. An interesting sketch of the Justices of the Superior Court, by Z. L. White, accompanied by engravings is an entertaining feature. Together with many other well known authors.

Jeannie Winston Coming.

We understand that the Pyke Opera Company will be in Salem on Thursday and Friday, July 28th and 29th. The well-known and popular Jeannie Winston is the leading singer in this company. She has never performed in Salem, but many of our towns people have been so anxious to hear her that they have taken the trouble to go Portland to hear her. So we shall expect to see a crowded house at the Opera House on those days named. They will place two popular operas upon the stage, one each night. Further announcement will be made next week. Prices as usual.

State Agricultural College.

This well known institution of learning has just issued its 22d annual catalogue of the officers and students, and general rules and regulations. During the last year there was 110 students enrolled. There were two graduates the last year. The school year is divided into three terms, and the first term will begin September 7th. For further information, address B. L. Arnold, President, Corvallis, Oregon.