

Some of Past, Present and Future of Coos and Curry.

Written for the Recorder by
M. G. POHL.

More than once the thought has entered my mind: "Are we, the people of Coos and Curry counties appreciating the great boon God has bestowed upon us to be inhabitants of a section which can not be duplicated on the great continent of North America?"

The thinking, the feeling person can not do otherwise than to sanction such an assertion, the criticism of the less intellectual is of no weight, we need not worry about it.

Allow me to speak of these two counties from the beginning, since white men have made them their homes.

The Pacific Ocean, the greatest expanse of water on this earth lies before us on the west of the counties.

Calm, without a wave or a ripple on the seas, pure, dark blue in color, the tidal wave raises in intervals long swells, then, falling again, it is the picture of a deep breathing, but slumbering monster.

A monster indeed, when aroused by storms; woe to the skipper when not prepared to meet the forces of nature freed of all bands; their powers there are less measurable than the depths of this ocean.

At the moment I try to introduce this picture to the reader, it is peace and calmness, only the waves of the ebb breaks leisurely against and over the beach. Over us spreads a clear blue sky without a cloud; far out at the horizon the reflection of the soon setting sun against heaven and water brilliantly illuminating the dome of the temple not made by the hand of mortals, but created by the Great Architect of the Universe.

Numbers of aquatic birds sail through the air, others have settled

land. Who are they? Besides Captain Tichenor are Captain I. M. Kirkpatrick, who, after the former sailed away for San Francisco to bring more men and needed provisions and ammunition, became the leader of the remainder, consisting of James Curigan, I. H. Eagan, C. Heddon, Joe Hussey, G. Ridonds, I. Sladder or Slater, B. King, and Ralph Erastus Summers.

Other white men had come to the southern part of the county of Curry. Their behavior was such that the Indians became hostile and with the Rogue River Indians continued had begun a bloody war against the newcomers.

For security, a rock of one hundred and fifty feet high, with abrupt walls surrounded by water at high tide was selected as the safest place against surprise from the Indians.

All hands now being kept busy to carry the cargo from the beach to the top of this rock, thus, not looking for an attack, they were surprised to see the Indians emerging from the fog and give battle.

However, they managed to climb to places of safety, and returned fire with their old rusty flint-lock guns; by fortune there was one and only one good rifle in possession of the whites, with which such good accounts were given that the Indians had to fall back; several of the fighters on the rock received wounds by the enemy. During the lull in the battle one of the party was ordered to get some water from the nearest creek nearly a quarter of a mile distant.

At his arrival there, the Indians, hidden, broke forth and captured him.

The most of the ammunition was used up; Erastus Summers, then a powerful man, supplied with a cutlass, jumped from the rock and reaching the captors of his friend slashed right and left, released the prisoner, and by the protection of the others shooting from their place above, came back sound and safe.

In the excitement of all and their praises of Summers they

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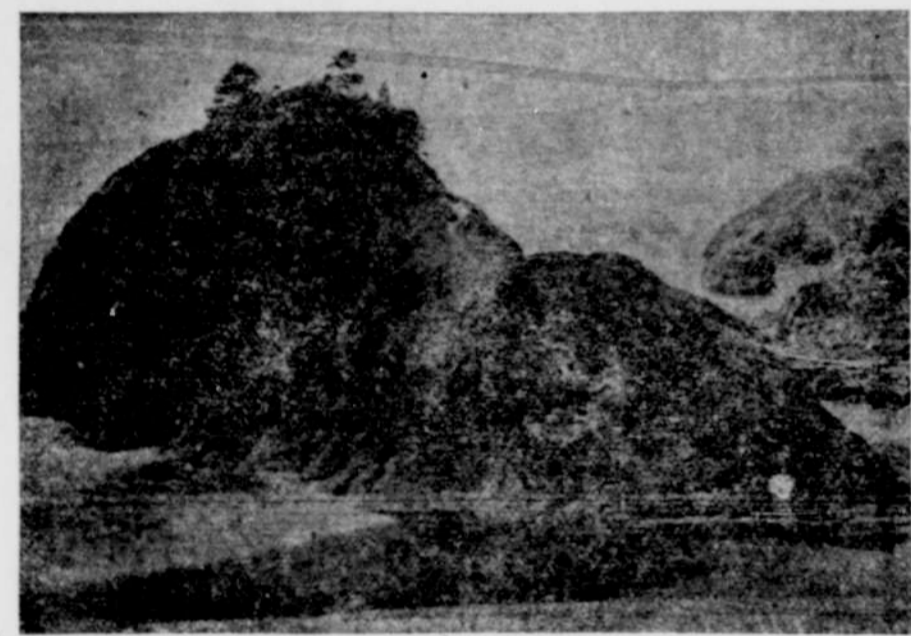
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BATTLE ROCK.

upon the near cliffs and rocks, while others are still floating upon the never still bosom of the briny deep; their shrill screams or their chatting with their companions fall upon the ear of the listeners in harmony with the swish and wash of the low breakers.

Well may we ask: "What are they saying?"

Further out upon the rocks and cliffs surrounded by water are herds of well-nourished sea lions, here, grouped together, there, moving about with apparent awkward actions, their great bodies are handled with remarkable strength and skill; their yelps can be heard a long distance, thereby expressing their delight of a happy, free existence surrounded by plenty among which they were born and grew up.

Then, turning landward, forests of gigantic trees crown mountain and dale as far as the eye can see, terra firma gradually rising here or there to considerable heights, building the coast range many miles eastward.

Life seems to be at rest, for none of the thousands of animals inhabiting the forest, nor the aborigines, the red men, are in sight.

The silver light of the moon has now given a different hue to land and sea, and peace and rest falls over nature.

It was the month of May, 1851. The morning light still is low, heavy fog has settled over all; the picture has changed. Into the harbor of Port Orford has sailed a small steamer, the Seagull from Portland.

About a dozen white men are busy discharging the cargo. Capt. Tichenor, with the first settlers of this section, have taken possession of the

called him "good, old Jack," and ever since Ralph Erastus was forgotten, and Summers was and is known to the present day as "old Jack." The rock was named "Battle Rock" and is so known everywhere by this historical name.

Unfortunately for him he was registered by Captain Kirkpatrick by his first name, in a petition for a pension; as Indian War Veteran, he was called Jack. Notwithstanding the corrections and affidavits by many others the Pension Bureau has refused to grant him such. Perhaps somebody else has the benefit of his bravery.

He now lives six miles above Langlois on Floras creek herding his sheep; bareheaded and barefooted, he does his work unflinchingly.

Shortly after this fight some troops arrived. The white men erected large log-houses for the use of the soldiers. The government never paid for this work either.

Some time in September this party of men under Col. TeVault's command, were requested to assist settlers on the Umpqua, by trying to cross the Coquille river between the present Prosper and Bandon and below where the Bullard ferry now is.

They were attacked by the Coquille Indians, five white men being killed and three others wounded.

In 1852, old Jack again served the troops as scout, then as surveyor, laying out the first road from the coast to the interior. He was engaged in different fights with the Rogue River Indians until the red men were subdued and placed on the different reservations; and still the government has never aided or paid him, much less granted him a pension. A proof of the truth of this can easily be had. The Bandon readers only have

to ask Mr. Harry Baldwin, of Bandon. He also was one of the earliest settlers on the Coquille river.

In 1857 Jack discovered the mines on the Sixes river; in 1860 he discovered the gold in the Salton mountain; in each of these mines he made money. So much of Jack, of days gone by.

The present conditions of the two counties are known to you. We have passed a length of time of more than fifty years.

There is a mighty change to be seen; towns and industries have sprung up, and other improvements show the advance of civilization; however, the greatest change to be found is the wanton destruction of the greatest part of our forests by fire, which should have been avoided, and the total extermination of our elk and other animals.

Civilization may grant those animals the right to exist, a right which God has willed to all of his creation. Selfishness and the evil nature of destructiveness of unprincipled men have committed a wrong not below murder of the innocent by their slaughter of those animals.

Let us pass this, too.

Now about the future of Curry and Coos counties. Quiescence!

Just as correctly as the scholar can cipher out a difficult question in arithmetic, or as the astronomer can measure the distance of stars millions of miles away, calculate the distances of the heavenly bodies so correctly that he can say where one star or the other was, is, or will be in time to come, so are other men competent to predict with accuracy, future developments of localities.

And what lies before us?

That railroads soon will connect us with the outside world is now a matter of fact and need not be spoken of, neither do we doubt that the government, no matter under which political party must improve navigation to its utmost. This established, business, and particularly different industries will spring up in many sections where at the present time no one thinks of, in particular will such be the case in all the districts where heavy black sand deposits are found, steel manufacturing will be centered in those counties, the manufacturing of glass and pressed brick of white sand is a twin industry to the first named one; gold, platinum and other high priced metals will be extracted from the same material as by products.

When tens of thousands of men are employed in those and other industries too numerous to mention all, will this not open the market for all the farmers? Does such seem possible to the reader? Not a pound of products raised here will be wasted, not an apple, prune or pear left on

the ground to waste. Such means again additional help for the agriculturalist.

The capitalists which come in here now and then are discouraged by our poor roads, those roads upon which enough money is expended to have them built in the most scientific methods, have changed their present undesirable forms, on rails in palace cars, thousands of visitors will come to enjoy our delicious climate. Many will stay and help to enlarge our towns, which by this time have grown up to be cities of some size.

The falls and rapids of our numerous streams will be harnessed to produce electricity, enough for any demand; there, where a mud sled is dragged, street cars for passengers and freight will whirl at the rate of one hundred miles an hour.

Medical men with capital finding the higher latitudes perfect, sanitariums for summer or winter invalids will be constructed upon points of which Curry County principally has some of the best, with views for hundreds of miles, such means again, highly improved locations.

Bandon then will have costly residences as far as the governmental lines near Cape Arago will permit.

Furthermore, with improved river and harbor, with the increase of the merchant marine it cannot fail that as long as nations go to war the harbors and other strategic points will be fortified and war vessels will be stationed. To create such works, other thousands of men are needed and forts erected.

With the disappearance of forests, it cannot be helped, our climate must change, the production of oxygen by plant life will be greatly reduced, here the hydrogen in the atmosphere can not combine with the great amount of oxygen produced at present. Our climate must become drier, and less rains will follow.

Not one of those predictions will fail to come. We older people may not see one half, one quarter of such changes, it is the younger generations which will reap the benefits of work, toil and hardships borne by the early settlers. Is it not worth while for the parents to urge their children on to greater efforts in cultivating their minds, improve their facilities so as to become worthy of all such a great future. Bear in mind, "Knowledge is Power."

The scenic beach of the Oregon coast is Bandon Beach.

Bandon is the only town in Coos county that is out of debt and has money in the treasury.



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