

OREGON.

Its Resources and Advantages.
Its inducements for Immigrants.
The availability of its Advantages for poor, etc. etc.

DALLAS, POLK COUNTY, OREGON,
February 15th, 1869.

MR. EDITOR:—Agreeable to your request, I furnish you, for the benefit of persons at a distance, who desire information in regard to this State, the following brief sketch of some of my observations upon the country, during a residence here since the autumn of 1846—a period of more than twenty-two years.

The boundaries of the State are as follows: "Beginning one marine league at sea, due west from the point where the 42° parallel of north latitude intersects the same; thence northerly, at the same distance from the line of the coast, lying west and opposite the State, including all islands within the jurisdiction of the United States, to a point due west and opposite the north ship channel of the Columbia river; thence easterly, to and up the middle channel of said river, and when it is divided by islands, up the middle of the widest channel thereof, to a point near Fort Walla Walla, where the 46° parallel of north latitude crosses said river; thence east, on said parallel, to the middle of the main channel of Snake river; thence up the middle of the main channel of said river to the mouth of the Owyhee river; thence due south, to the parallel of latitude 42° north; thence west along said parallel to the place of beginning."

The area of the State is over 100,000 square miles; and its present population about 100,000. In extent, Oregon is larger than Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and the District of Columbia all together; and while they are now supporting a population of about fifty four persons to the square mile, Oregon has less than one person to the square mile. While they are troubled with the disagreeable distinctions between rich and poor, there is comparatively nothing of the kind felt in Oregon; for here, no one is excessively rich, and no one is, or at least, need be, very poor. It requires but little exertion to make a living here, compared with the Atlantic States; the country is new, and the people very much on a level of equality. The Willamette Valley alone, (which is one of the finest countries in the world,) is almost as large as Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut; and while they support a population of about 2,000,000, this valley has a population of only about 50,000.

The coast of Oregon is what seamen call "iron-bound." The Coast Range of mountains extends the entire length of the State from the Columbia river to the southern boundary, and continues on through the State of California. These mountains nowhere rise to the altitude of perpetual snow; their soil is rich, and they are covered from base to summit with the finest timber in the world; fir, cedar, hemlock, ash, maple, alder, yew, laurel, yellow, and sugar pine, live oak, and many other valuable kinds of timber. From these mountains many fine streams of the purest water, filled with trout, salmon, and other excellent fishes, run rapidly down to the ocean.

Our principal entrance for shipping is the mouth of the Great Columbia river; where vessels of all sizes may enter and depart at all times with perfect ease and safety. The principal rivers running into the Pacific from the western slope of the Coast Range, south of the Columbia, and in Oregon, are the Nehalem, the Tillamook, the Nestucca, the Siletz, the Salmon, the Aquina, the Alsea, the Siuslaw, the Umpqua, the Coquille, the Flora, the Sixes, the Elk, the Rogue River, and the Chetco. The principal bays and entrances for vessels, south of the Columbia, are Tillamook bay, Aquina bay, the Umpqua river, Coose Bay, the mouth of the Coquille and Port Orford. The distance from the summit of the

Coast Range to the sea being very short, many of the streams along the coast precipitate themselves into the Pacific without forming any bay, or harbor for shipping.

The western coast of Oregon presents a rather rough and uninviting aspect, in the main; yet there are many fine settlements along it; and there are innumerable situations where happy homes might be made, if men would go upon them with sufficient nerve to attack and subdue the huge forests that cover them. There, such a thing as sickness is almost unknown; the climate is mild the air and water pure, and the soil exceedingly rich and productive, while the water-power, and facilities for manufacturing lumber are unsurpassed; with the broad highway of the Pacific, stretching away to the best markets in the world. The Indian Reservation, covering the principal part of the coast west of the Willamette Valley, is the great obstacle to the settlement, and improvement of that part of our State.

A little over a hundred miles east of the Pacific coast, and running almost parallel with it is the Cascade Range of mountains, extending through the State, from the Cascade falls of the Columbia river to the California line; where they continue on under the name of the Sierra Nevada. Along this chain of mountains rise the great peaks of perpetual snow; Mount Hood, Mount Jefferson, the Three Sisters, and Mount McLaughlin. The Cascade and Coast ranges of mountains are connected together by the Calapooya mountains at the head of the Willamette Valley; the Umpqua mountains at the head of the Umpqua Valley, and the Rogue River and Siskiyou mountains in the southern part of the State.

The Willamette Valley lies between the Cascade and Coast Ranges of mountains, and extends from the Calapooya mountains, northward, to the Columbia river, a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles, with an average width of about eighty miles, and an area of about 12,000 square miles of the finest agricultural land on the globe. Through this Valley, from south to north, flows the Willamette river into the Columbia, about seventy miles from the sea—to follow the course of the channel. The Willamette river is fed by numerous fine, clear streams, flowing into it from the mountains on either side, and supplying the rich lands with abundance of water. There are easy passes through the Coast mountains, from the Willamette to the sea; and, in fact, all along the entire extent of the State. The best timber of the Valley, consists of red, white, and yellow fir, yellow pine, hemlock, cedar white oak, maple, ash, alder, balsam, yew, and various other kinds of valuable trees. The soil is deep and productive.

The Umpqua Valley lies immediately south of the Willamette, and is reached from the latter by easy passes through the Calapooya mountains; the grade is hardly perceptible in passing from one to the other, along what is called the Pass Creek road. The Umpqua river flows through this rich valley, and is fed by clear swift tributaries from the mountains on either side, similar to the Willamette. The principal difference between this and the Willamette Valley, is the numerous detached, mound-like hills in the Umpqua Valley, and its deep black soil. The gray soil of the Willamette is preferable to the black sticky soil of the Umpqua, on account of its being easier to work. In this valley they have the red oak, which also grows in the head of the Willamette Valley. The climate of these two valleys is very much the same.

To the south of the Umpqua lies the Rogue River Valley, which is very rough and broken; there is a considerable quantity of excellent agricultural land, and many fine farms and settlements; yet, this valley is more valuable, perhaps, considering the present population, for its mines of gold than for anything else.

East of the Rogue River Valley lies the Great Klamath Lake country, between the Cascade and Blue mountains, watered principally by the melting snows of Mount McLaughlin and the Three Sisters. The soil is rich, the timber on the mountains is of the best quality; and it is said to be one of the finest grazing countries on the Pacific slope. The warlike character of the Indians has kept back the settlement of this part of the State until recently; but, now, since the natives have been subdued, it is settling up rapidly, and in a few years that part of our State will bloom like a garden.

North of the Klamath Lake country lies the Crooked River, and the Ocheo valleys, south of the Blue Mountains that lead off to the north east from the Cascade range and then circle down towards the south east corner of the State. These valleys are much in the same condition as the Klamath country; but since the Indians have been subdued, pioneers find them rich in agricultural and grazing lands, and mines of gold and silver. To the north east of the Klamath lies the Harney Lake country; an extensive district of good land and fine grass; as yet, not much explored, and but imperfectly known.

Across the Blue Mountains still to the north, and along the Columbia, are the valleys of Des Chutes, John Day's river, the Umatilla, and part of the Walla Walla. This part of the State has been rapidly settling up for many years; yet there is plenty of vacant land left. It is a fine agricultural and grazing country, with rich mines of gold, an enterprising population, and is making rapid strides in every kind of improvement.

Following up Snake river south along the eastern boundary of the State, we have the Grande Ronde Valley, the Powder river valley, the Burnt river valley, the Malheur river valley, and the Owyhee river valley. This is all fine agricultural and grazing country, rich in mines of gold and silver, and but sparsely settled, as yet.

Oregon has almost every climate you can mention from the mild temperate, to the high frigid. The climate along the coast is mild and very healthy. On the coast, and in the Willamette, Umpqua and Rogue River Valleys the climate is very much the same. In the summer, a gentle breeze blows from the mountains toward the sea, in the forenoon, and from the sea toward the mountains in the afternoon. In the winter the winds from the South Pacific strike the coast at the south western extremity of the State, and following the natural channel between the Cascade and Coast ranges bring up the clouds from the ocean, which gives us what we call the "rainy season," of from four to six months duration. When these winds change their course and flow back toward the south we sometimes have freezing weather, in these valleys, for a short time. While they continue to blow from the south, which they usually do, for the greater part of the winter, the weather is generally mild, with frequent gentle rains. When the winter winds blow from the Isthmus of Darien, or the Gulf of Mexico we have snow; the snow usually lies but a short time in these valleys. In the Rogue River valley they have more snow and less rain than in the Willamette and Umpqua. In the valleys east of the Cascade mountains, there is more snow and frost in winter, and but little rain. The summers all over the State are dry, clear, and pleasant; the heat of the sun being toned down by the cool breezes blowing in every direction from the high chain of snow peaks through the centre.

What is called the "rainy season," peculiar to the valleys near the coast, consists, for the most part, of warm, gentle rains, which fall for several days at a time; and sometimes, for two or three weeks, with intervals of pleasant weather, of several days, or weeks duration. It is not one continuous, monotonous rain, during the whole winter, as many who are unacquainted with the country suppose. Along the Atlantic they have heavy, drifting storms of snow, with piercing winds and frost; here, it is seldom cold enough to snow, and our fall weather consists principally of mild rains, accompanied with warm winds from the South Pacific. In these valleys we have but little freezing weather, and that little of brief duration.

The western part of the State is not very inviting to persons of a rheumatic disposition. The principal fevers are typhoid, and scarlet. Fever and ague prevails to some extent along the rivers, and near lakes, and marshes; but a few miles from these, it is never known. There is comparatively little sickness in the State, anywhere, or at any time of the year. The people have fresh, clear complexions, and are active and robust. Children are healthy, clear-headed, and apt to learn. The health of our women is not generally so good as that of our men and children; which I attribute, mainly, to the multitude of very early marriages of women. Young men immigrate from the east, keeping the number of women always far below that of the men, consequently young girls are demanded for wives, almost as soon as they reach their "teens." It would be a good thing for the State, if women could immigrate from the east as rapidly as men.

The city of Portland, the commercial emporium of the State is situated on the west bank of the Willamette river, about twelve miles above its junction with the Columbia; and Oregon City, at the falls of the Willamette, about twelve miles further up. Between these two cities is Millwaukie on the east side, and Oswego on the west. Near Oswego is the Oregon Iron Works, one of the best iron mines in the world. Salem, the capital of the State is on the east side of the river, about forty miles above Oregon City; and there are a number of small towns scattered along on either side, between the two cities. Along the Willamette above

Salem are the small towns of Eola, Independence, Buena Vista; then Albany, which is a flourishing little city, and the prettiest one in the State, everything considered; then the cities of Corvallis and Eugene, with many little towns scattered along. The principal towns of the Umpqua are Roseburg, Scottsburg, Oakland, and Canyonville; Oakland and Roseburg are beautiful places. Jacksonville, Ashland, Kerbyville are the principal towns of the Rogue river valley. Along the coast are the cities of Port Orford, on Tichenor's Bay, Round Bay at the mouth of the Coquille, Empire city, on Coose Bay, Scottsburg at the mouth of the Umpqua, and Aquina on Aquina Bay. East of the Cascade mountains is the city of the Dalles, situated at the Dalles of the Columbia, and is the commercial emporium of the north eastern part of the State, and the eastern part of Washington Territory. At the mouth of the river Des Chutes about sixteen miles from the Dalles is the city of Celilo. Between these two cities there has been a railroad in operation for several years, and is the only one in operation in the State. Then further up the Columbia is the city of Umatilla; and there are the inland cities of La Grande in the Grande Ronde Valley; Auburn on Powder river, and Conyon City on the head waters of John Day's river, with many other towns too numerous to mention.

There are two lines of railroads now being constructed from the city of Port and up the Willamette valley, one on the east side of the river through Milwaukie, Oregon City, Salem, Albany, Corvallis and Eugene City; the other on the west, leaving the city of Portland at the head of 4th street, it passes out through Hillsboro, Forest Grove, McMinville, Amity, Dallas, Independence, Buena Vista, Corvallis and Eugene City.

The lands of Oregon yield the finest wheat crops of any other portion of the world; the grain reaching a size, and plumpness not seen in the grain of any other country, and the crops never fail. Oats, barley, and in fact all small grains grow to the best advantage. It is unsurpassed for fruit, and garden vegetables.

It is known all over the Pacific slope as "the land of big red apples." The people have taken great pride in planting large orchards of the best selected fruits, which bare heavily every year, and never fail. The orchards of Oregon have been a source of great profit to the people, and wealth to the State. Peaches grow well but not so well as apples. It is a great country for pears, plums, cherries, currants, blackberries, strawberries, and many other fine fruits and berries. Some parts of the State cannot be beaten for grapes; but they do not ripen very well in the Willamette valley.

In consequence of our small streams being short and rapid we have the greatest waterpowers of any other State; hence, our mills and our manufacturing establishments are numerous, and of the best quality. In point of manufacturing interests, Oregon is the New England of the Pacific.

Oregon has no religion; or, rather, she has all religions. The church spires of the Methodist, the Campbellite, the Baptist, the Presbyterian, the Catholic, the Episcopalian, the Lutheran, the Congregationalist, and a thousand and one other christian denominations, shoot up all over the country; and everybody worships his own conscience, to the dictates of his own conscience. The Jew has his Synagogue, the Christian his Church, and the heathenish Chinaman his Josh-house.

There are no beggars; and but little crime. The country is dotted all over with school-houses. We have a liberal system of common schools, for so new and weak a state. The poorest cottage in the State has its books and newspapers. The people are all fond of reading; and you seldom meet with a man or woman, over eighteen years of age, who is not fully read up with the times, and able to discuss intelligently, the "situation," from raising beets, to a cabinet meeting. All have their opinions of Beverdy Johnson and the Alabama claims, as well as the proper time to plant potatoes.

This is one of the best countries on the globe for horses and the people have always taken great pride in rearing them. A diseased horse is seldom met with; and, I believe I have never seen a blind horse in the State. They are generally fleet, hardy, and live to a very great age. The celebrated race-mare Comet was bred in Oregon. She astonished America, England, and I believe France, with her wonderful achievements on the turf; and like Eclipse, never was beaten. We furnish annually a great number of fine carriage, and draft horses to California. The horses of Oregon are constantly improving, and the State is destined, in this respect, to become the Arabia of America. It is, also, a healthy country for cattle, sheep and hogs; and we have a great many very fine breeds of each. Sheep are very healthy, multiply rapidly, and produce very fine heavy fleeces. The farmers have great pride in breeding sheep, and have imported the best stock they could procure. The woolen factories, that have been built up all over the State within the last eight or ten years, have given great encouragement

to wool growing, which has added much to the wealth of the farmer and the State. Beef and mutton are always in great demand in the mining portions of the State.

Salt springs are numerous, and of the best quality. In the Willamette and Umpqua valleys are very strong indications of petroleum; and there is no doubt, if the country should be thoroughly examined by men who understand this subject, its petroleum mines would be found equal to those of the east. The strong indications of petroleum are frequently met with in newly dug wells, where they penetrate into the bed rock.

Some idea of the cheapness and productiveness of lands may be gathered from the fact, that in the best and most populous parts of the country, from one acre of land may be produced enough in one year to pay for three acres; and there is no lack of a market, for the Pacific Ocean gives us the world for a market.

While other parts of the Pacific coast further south have suffered severely from the effects of earthquakes, nothing of the kind has ever affected Oregon since its settlement. Oregon really needs nothing but people. She needs a population for her thousands of acres of unoccupied lands. Most of the prairie lands in the western part of the State are occupied; but there is plenty of the richest lands yet vacant, where energetic industry may have ample opportunity to carve out the finest homes. East of the Cascade mountains there is yet abundance of prairie land unappropriated, and, we might say, almost unexplored. These lands may be taken by settlers under the homestead act of Congress, for the mere settling upon them; they may be taken by preemption, and paid for as you get able, at one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre; or where they have been located as school, or State lands they may be purchased at two dollars per acre. The best prairie lands in the State may be purchased from their present owners for from ten to twenty dollars per acre—such places as along the Hudson, Connecticut, and Ohio rivers would be regarded as cheap at from fifty to, perhaps, five hundred dollars per acre. People! people! is all that Oregon needs! She has the soil, the timber, the water, the gold, the silver, the iron, the copper, the coal, the climate—in a word, everything, but the people to develop and enjoy her abundant resources.

The young men and women of the east, who toil almost hopelessly, the better part of their lives to amass enough to enable them to marry and settle down, should turn their attention westward. Marry at once, and if you have a few hundred dollars, get on the steam-er and come to Oregon; or cross the plains by the Pacific railroad and over land stages; here, you will find that all you have been toiling and hoping for, has been lying for ages, idly awaiting an intelligent possessor. If you have money all the better; come! If you have only youth, and strength, and a will to work, it is enough; come! Here health, and wealth, and happiness await you. Oregon does not need, nor want, nor invite, drunken, lazy, lounging loafers—but young, stout, intelligent, industrious men and women.

If you are too poor to come by steamer, or by railroad and stage then cross the plains in a light wagon, with mules, or horses, or oxen; or if you are too poor for that, strike out, and work your way across; for the settlements now extend clear across the continent; and anywhere along the way you may get good wages for your labor. Labor is always in demand here; by a few months work you can make enough to support you for the year, and the remainder of the time you can devote to the improvement of your own homestead. The best and speediest way of reaching Oregon, now is, to come on the railroad to Salt Lake City; and from there to the Columbia by the stage. I believe this route costs a person about three hundred dollars. You need not expect to find this country exactly a Paradise, without a single fault where you have nothing to do but lie on your back in the perfumed shades of orange groves, and suck "milk and honey," or "mint juleps" through a rye straw, from the running brooks; but if health, and independence, and wholesome labor, with a future prospect of abundant wealth is all you desire, or expect, then Oregon will suit you.

Now, Mr. Editor, I believe I have complied with your request. I have not had time nor space to make this article as full and comprehensive as it should be, but I have condensed as much as possible; and I have written simply, as I should have written a common letter to a friend in the Atlantic States. What I have written, I think will stand the test of investigation; and if it will aid in the least, in bringing immigration to our young and rising State, I am content. More people is all we need in Oregon.

Respectfully yours,
J. L. COLLINS.

Educational Notice.
Public examination of Teachers will take place on the second Saturday of March, June, September and December.
J. H. MYER,
Supt. Common Schools, Polk Co.

The long and tedious contest at law between Messrs. Boon and McClane in which the title to very valuable property in North Salem was involved, has been concluded in the U. S. Supreme Court in favor of Mr. McClane.

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