

voted to cattle raising, and sheep raising. For many years animals were pastured the year round, the luxuriant growth of natural grass being sufficient to furnish them feed both winter and summer, but as flocks and herds increased it became necessary to provide artificial feed for the winter months, and in consequence thousands of tons of hay are put up each year in the stock country as a safeguard against severe storms and deep snows. While wheat raising is the leading industry of the county at present, sheep and cattle come next, and are the source of bringing a vast amount of money into the country each year. This year there were over 20,000 head of mutton sheep sold in the county and some 2,000 head of beef, while the assessment roll shows there were 6,583 cattle and 123,529 sheep owned in the county on the 1st day of March last.

GENERAL BUSINESS.

Among the varied resources of Wasco county, wheat has this year taken the lead, there having been raised for export 500,000 bushels, and about 100,000 bushels have been retained for home consumption, and seed. The average price realized by farmers has been 75 cents a bushel, making the crop of 1897 worth \$450,000 to the producers. Besides this there was raised 90,000 bushels of oats and 70,000 bushels of barley and rye, valued at about \$60,000; also 15,000 tons of hay, the value of which was \$150,000. No oats, barley, rye or hay of consequence is exported, it being kept for home consumption. The next industry of importance is sheep. The 123,529 sheep in the county yield on an average of about nine pounds of wool per head, or 1,200,000 pounds, which at an average price of 11 cents per pound, has brought into the county some \$132,000, added to which is \$30,000 for mutton sold for export, making the total receipts from the sheep industry \$162,000. Third in importance is the fruit industry. There are very nearly 6,000 acres planted to orchard in the county and some 300 acres in grapes. It is impossible to give anything like an accurate estimate of the amount of money received from the sale of fruit any one year, it being handled by such a great number of dealers, and shipped to so many different points. During the season of 1897 there were 60 full car loads of green fruit shipped from The Dalles, Hood River and Mosier, the three principal fruit shipping points in the county, and half that amount shipped in less than car load lots. The greater portion of these shipments went to Chicago, though a number of car loads were shipped to New York, while Butte, Montana, took several car loads, and some winter apples were shipped to Texas. Besides the fruit marketed in a green state, six car loads of dried prunes have been shipped from The Dalles this season, and a considerable amount of dried peaches and pears. The vegetable garden is becoming a source of considerable importance among the farmers located near transportation lines, and large quantities of vegetables, such as cabbage, beans, peas, tomatoes, celery, melons and egg plant, are shipped to Portland and Sound cities each year.

The Columbia river is one of the greatest food fish producers in the world, and along its banks in Wasco county an industry has been built up that is a source of great wealth. The past two seasons, however, fishing has not been profitable, the salmon run having been extremely light. The two species of fish caught in this stream for market are the salmon and the sturgeon. The former are taken principally with fish wheels, while the latter are caught on hooks sunk to the bottom of the river. There are three canneries in the county where salmon are preserved—one at Seufert's, three miles east of The Dalles, one at Tumwater, twelve miles east of The Dalles, the other in the city.

POPULATION AND VALUES.

According to the census taken by the assessor in 1895, Wasco county had a population of 10,354, and at the last general election cast 3131 votes.

The property valuations, as shown by the assessment roll for 1897 are as follows:

	Number.	Total Value.
Acres of tillable land,	92,492	\$536,011
Acres of non-tillable land,	271,095	505,773
Improvements on deeded land,		193,573
Town and city lots,		452,496
Improvements on city lots,		422,105
Improvements on land not deeded,		37,430
Miles of railroad bed,	60 6-10	242,400
Railroad rolling stock,		36,299
Miles of telegraph and telephone lines,61	18,285
Merchandise and stock in trade,		203,795
Farming implements, wagons and carriages,		42,578
Steamboats sail boats, stationary engines, etc.,		53,282
Money,		7,987
Notes and accounts,		66,449
Shares of stock,	794	65,832
Household furniture, jewelry, etc.,		87,537
Horses and mules,	4,529	72,244
Cattle,	6,583	71,835
Sheep and goats,	123,529	123,529
Swine,	3,107	5,077
Gross value of all property,		\$3,241,517
Exemptions,		228,131
Total taxable property,		\$3,013,386

This assessment is made on a basis of about 60 per cent. of the actual value of all classes of property, hence the real value of property in the county is very nearly \$5,000,000.

PUBLIC LANDS.

To the homeseeker, the one looking for public lands on which to locate, Wasco and Sherman counties offer liberal inducements. Although settlement of this section began more than half a century ago, there still remains considerable government land subject to entry, that if brought into cultivation would furnish comfortable homes for thousands of people. Within the past few years vast tracts of land have been entreted, yet there are thousands of acres open to settlement that cost only the fees for making homestead entry and final proof. The records of The Dalles United States Land Office show the amount of public land in each county subject to entry under the homestead laws on July 1st each year.

	Surveyed.	Unsurveyed.	Total.
1894—Wasco,	652,500	185,900	837,500
1894—Sherman,	130,550	1,900	132,450
1895—Wasco,	620,880	179,060	799,960
1895—Sherman,	113,495	1,900	115,395
1896—Wasco,	589,498	179,060	768,558
1896—Sherman,	97,834	1,900	99,734
1897—Wasco,	512,387	179,060	711,346
1897—Sherman,	68,497	1,900	70,397

Thus it will be seen that from July 1, 1894, to July 1, 1897, 188,207 acres of government land have been entered by actual settlers. The fact that such an amount has been taken during recent years is evidence that much of the remaining vacant land is worthy of attention. Here the home hunter may find vacant land on which to establish a home awaiting his coming. To be sure there are few tracts that are all tillable land, yet on a tract of 160 acres from 20 to 100 acres may be found that are arable, while the remainder when fenced becomes good grazing land.

EARLY HISTORY OF WASCO COUNTY.

The county of Wasco was organized by the territorial legislature of Oregon on January 11, 1854, and at the time of organization contained within its boundaries nearly as much territory as is embraced in the entire state to-day. Oregon then reached from the Pacific ocean to the summit of the Rocky mountains, and from the Columbia river to California. The act creating Wasco county defined its boundaries as follows: Commencing at the Cascades of the Columbia river; thence running up said river to the point where the southern shore of said river is intersected by the southern boundary of Washington territory; thence east along said boundary to the eastern boundary of Oregon territory; thence southerly along the eastern boundary of said territory to the southern boundary of the same; thence west along said southern boundary to the Cascade mountains; thence along said range of mountains to the place of beginning. This embraced all of what is now termed Eastern Oregon, and the greater portion of southern Idaho, an area of about 130,000 square miles, a territory equal in size to the states of New York and Pennsylvania.

In this vast area there were not at that time to exceed three hundred white citizens, most of whom were trappers in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company and American Fur Company. Less than half a hundred were actual settlers, but this little handful of patriots was composed of sturdy pioneers who carved out of the then wilderness a mighty empire. They were true, law-abiding citizens, who sought county government as a protection to their property and as a safeguard against the ravages of the lawless element that then held sway throughout the northwest.

The administration of civil affairs in the county established under the territorial laws was delegated to a board of county commissioners; but no record was kept of the transactions from the date of organization, January 11, until April 3, 1854. That date is the earliest record of any meeting of the county board, and is presumably the date of the first session of Wasco county court. The records are incomplete, with reference to who constituted the board, though William C. Laughlin, afterwards county judge, is mentioned as the chairman, and Jack Crabb was sheriff, while W. C. Moody held the office of sheriff's clerk.

The records of the first meeting of the board of county commissioners held in The Dalles, April 3, 1854, recorded in the first book of records of Wasco county, are as follows: "Nathan Olney and M. M. Cushing were appointed justices of the peace; Daniel Butler and George Cannon, as constables; W. G. Bigelow, M. M. Cushing and Wm. R. Gibson, judges of election for Dalles precinct; G. Atwell, for justice of the peace; John Chapman, constable; James Newman, G. A. Atwell and John Chapman, judges of election for Falls precinct. No other business coming before the board, adjournment was taken to the fourth Monday in April."

From these records it appears that 43 years ago there were only two voting precincts, three justices of the peace and three constables in all of Oregon between the Cascades and Rocky mountains. They were located at The Dalles and Falls (now Cascade Locks).

In those days resorting to courts as arbitrators in civil actions was an infrequent occurrence, except between parties living convenient to the seat of government, and even criminal matters were often settled outside the court room. An idea of the inconvenience of dispensing justice during the early history of Eastern Oregon may be gained from the account given of the execution of Berry Way at Canyon City, in 1863.

The gold mines at that place had been discovered the year previous, and hundreds of desperate characters had flocked thither. Way was among the number. His avarice induced him to murder a companion named Gallagher, and appropriate his money and horses. Gallagher's death soon became known to the miners, and the crime of his murder was then fastened upon Way. The deputy sheriff was the only peace officer in that section, and Way was taken in custody by that official. Jails were then unknown, and miners wagers being \$5.00 per day, while the deputy's per diem was only \$2.00, he could not afford to stand guard over the prisoner or hire an assistant, so Way was tied to a log for safe keeping. One night he escaped, but was recaptured at Boise and brought back to Canyon City. Having been put to considerable trouble in recapturing the murderer, the deputy sheriff refused to further inconvenience himself by bringing the prisoner to The Dalles to be tried. It was a journey of 200 miles through an Indian country, with savages who were no respecters of even high officials, lurking behind every wayside hiding place. The deputy sheriff determined to be put to no more trouble by Way, and calling to his assistance a number of trusted friends, proceeded to serve in the capacity of judge, jury and executioner, and Berry Way expiated his crime on the gallows.

But let us return to the meeting of the board of commissioners of Wasco county, on the fourth Monday in April, 1854. No business came before the board, and an adjournment was taken to Wednesday, the 26th. On this day the records show that William C. Laughlin acted as chairman and J. A. Simmons as clerk. Only one day was required to transact the business of the term, and the acts of the board for this day were recorded as follows:

"Granted license to Orlando Hummason to keep a ferry on Snake river, at a point within a distance of three miles above or below Fort Boise, said ferry only required to be kept in time of the immigration passing. Assessed the tax for license at \$50 per annum for the term of two years. Rates of ferrying to be for a wagon and person belonging thereto, \$2.00; for cattle and horses, \$1.00 per head, for passengers, 50 cents; for sheep, 25 cents per head.

"Granted to Richard Marshall license to keep a ferry at or near Salmon Falls, on Snake river, for the term of two years. Tax, rates and provisions same as granted to O. Hummason.

"Granted to C. C. Irwin license to keep a ferry on Green river, at a point 80 miles above the boundary line between Utah and Oregon, with the same tax, rates and provisions as granted to O. Hummason.

Granted license to I. S. Henderson to keep a grocery at The Dalles for six months at the rate of \$50 per annum, commencing the 1st day of April, 1854.

"Appointed place of voting at the home of Mr. Forsythe."

These records give some idea of the manner of transacting county business in those primitive days; also from them one can conceive the extent of the territory covered by Wasco county when first established. Its jurisdiction extended to the Utah line, 500 miles from the county seat.

The first election for county officers was held on June 6, 1854, and the result was recorded in the commissioner's journal as follows:

"At a general election held at The Dalles, in Wasco county, Oregon territory, on June 6, 1854, Richard A. Marshall, Charles Evelyn and I. L. Henderson were duly elected, and qualified according to law, as commissioners in and for said county of Wasco.

"In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 10th day of June, 1854.

"J. A. SIMMONS, Auditor."

The records further show that on July 3d the board of commissioners met and appointed Benjamin M. Reynolds sheriff and O. Hummason sheriff's clerk, an office embracing the duties of county clerk, recorder and deputy sheriff.

LOSS OF TERRITORY.

Thus was Wasco county, then the largest county in the United States, organized and officered. It maintained its vast dimensions until the territory of Idaho was established, when at least one-third the county was eliminated. Following this loss, Baker county was cut off on September 22, 1862, and on September 27 of the same year Umatilla county was created. Union county was set apart in September, 1864. By the establishing of these three counties Wasco lost all its territory east of the Blue mountains, also that part north of the 45th degree of latitude and east of the John Day river. Its next loss occurred in September, 1870, when the legislature established Grant county, embracing the territory now comprising Grant, Harney, Lake and Klamath counties. Again, on October 24, 1882, another county was carved out of Wasco, Crook county, a territory of over 8,000 square miles, being cut off from the southern part, by act of the legislature. The last division of Wasco county was made on February 25, 1889, when by act of the legislature Sherman county was created, and by this act Wasco lost 684 square miles of territory, embracing some of the best agricultural land in the northwest.

Thus Wasco county, that once contained some 130,000 square miles, has been divided until to-day it embraces only about 2,844 square miles, 324 square miles of which are in Warm Springs Indian reserve. Seven counties in Idaho and thirteen in Oregon have been created out of its original territory.

EARLY SETTLEMENT.

A sketch of the early history of Wasco county would be incomplete without some reference to those sturdy pioneers by whose heroic deeds the wilderness of half a century ago was subdued.

The first settlement within what is now Wasco county was probably the Catholic mission at The Dalles, but the first homesteader of whom we have any record to establish a permanent residence was a French trapper named Joseph Leventure, who staked out a land claim on what was afterwards known as the Logan estate, in 1846. Afterwards he was attracted to California by the discovery of gold, and abandoned his possessions here.

In 1847 Nathan Olney took up a donation claim on what is known as the John Irvine farm, but he too went to California when the discovery of gold was made.

The next permanent settlement was made by William C. Laughlin, in 1851. He located a claim and built a house at Crate's point, but abandoned it the following year, and located a donation claim on Hood river. The same year Justice Chenoweth settled on a piece of land three miles below The Dalles, erecting a large house, and making other substantial improvements.

C. W. Denton, the pioneer fruit raiser of this section, put out his first orchard on the land he still owns on Mill creek in 1854. That year D. Bolton located on Fifteen-Mile, where he began farming on quite an extensive scale, and is said to have been the first farmer to raise a crop of wheat in Oregon east of the Cascade mountains.

These were the pioneer agriculturalists of Wasco county, and to them is due the credit of having developed the agricultural resources of what in later years has become one of the greatest grain producing sections of the northwest.

THE FIRST INDUSTRIES.

When the whites first settled in this section, the entire country was covered with a luxuriant growth of native grasses which suggested to the husbandman its adaptability to stock raising. As a result little attention was given to other branches of agriculture, and until 1870 Wasco county was one vast cattle range, only so much land being cultivated as was necessary to supply home demand with flour and hay, nothing being raised for export. From the time of its early settlement to 1870, Wasco county was the home of the "cowboy," but gradually cattle ranches gave way to wheat farms, and the hills, once covered with bunchgrass, were converted into fields of waving grain.

A PIONEER WEDDING.

In the pioneer days of the '50's weddings were of infrequent occurrence. In fact, Wasco county had been established more than two and one-half years before a marriage was solemnized within its borders. Still men were susceptible to the charms of women, and doubtless others would have fallen victim to Cupid's wiles had the fairer sex been more plenty. Nevertheless fair maidens were led to the altar by brave men, and the first marriage in Wasco county of which there is any record, was celebrated on October 3, 1856. In a little volume among the county's archives this record is found:

"Territory of Oregon, County of Wasco, ss.
"This is to certify that the undersigned, a justice of the peace, did on the 3d day of October, 1856, join in lawful wedlock William C. McKay and Miss M. Campbell, in the presence of Dr. Atkins, Dr. Bates, R. R. Thompson and many other witnesses. Oh! what a glorious time we had.
"C. W. SHANG, Justice of the Peace."