

The Daily Morning Astorian.

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ASTORIA, OREGON, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1884.

PRICE, FIVE CENTS.

THE FOUNDER OF ASTORIA.

The Great Grandchildren of the German Butcher Boy Celebrating the Centennial of His Arrival.

HOW JOHN JACOB ASTOR MADE MONEY.

The ball which Mrs. William Astor gave on January 21st to 900 New Yorkers commemorated the centennial landing in New York of John Jacob Astor, the founder of the family, and a wonderful man in some respects. He seems to have had many faults, this Baden butcher's apprentice; he was ruled by his money bags; he was avaricious, selfish, mean, and in later years, averse to giving away one dollar of his vast fortune outside of his own family. But he had a genius for commercial speculation. Since his day the Astors have been steady-going, unimaginative, heavy-minded men, who have marched alongside of the vast snowball of money which John Jacob Astor sent rolling down hill, and this will probably be the arduous duty of many generations of Astors to come. But this John Jacob Astor was made of different stuff; a man of ideas, boldness, quick perceptions and extraordinary executive powers. To the end of his life nothing interested him so much as the price current of staple goods in another country. He could show on paper how a fortune could be made by buying this and selling that, and his calculations were so well founded that he used to boast that not one of twenty of his commercial ventures miscarried.

A hundred years ago, in the poor little village of Waldorf, in the Duchy of Baden, lived a jovial butcher, named Jacob Astor, who felt himself much more at home in the beer house than at the firsides of his own house. This roystering village butcher and his much-enduring wife were the progenitors of our millionaire. They had four sons—George Peter Astor, born in 1752; Henry Astor, born in 1754; John Melchior Astor, born in 1759; and John Jacob Astor, born July 17, 1763. Each of these sons made haste to fly from the privations and contentions of their home as soon as they were old enough; and what is more remarkable, each of them had a cast of character precisely the opposite of their thrifty father. Abandoned thus by his three brothers, John Jacob Astor had to endure for some years a most cheerless and miserable lot. He lost his mother, too, from whom he had derived all that was good in his character and most of the happiness of his childhood. A step-mother replaced her, "who loved not Jacob," nor John Jacob. The father, still devoted to pleasure, quarreled so bitterly with his new wife, that his son was often glad to escape to the house of a school-fellow (living in 1854), where he would pass the night in a garret or outhouse, thankfully accepting for his supper a crust of dry bread, and returning the next morning to assist in the slaughter-house or carry out the meat. It was not often that he had enough to eat; his clothes were of the poorest description; and as to money, he had absolutely none of it. On Palm Sunday, 1777, when he was about 14 years of age, John Jacob Astor was confirmed. He then consulted his father upon his future, and was appointed apprentice to a watch-maker in the paternal coffers. The trade of butcher he knew and disliked. Nor was he inclined to accept as his destiny for life the position of servant or laborer. A deep discontent settled upon him. The tidings of the good fortune of his brothers inflamed his desire to seek his fortune in the new world. The news of the revolutionary war, which drew all eyes upon America, and in which the people of all lands sympathized with the struggling colonies, had its effect upon him. He began to long for the "new land," as the Germans then styled America; and it is believed in Waldorf that soon after the capture of Burgoyne had spread abroad, a confidence in the final success of the colonists, the youth sought to emigrate to America. With a small bundle of clothes hung over his shoulder upon a stick, with a crown or two in his pocket, he said the last farewell to his father and his friends, and set out on foot for the Rhine, a few miles distant. Valentine Jeanne, his old schoolmaster, said, as the lad was lost to view: "I am not afraid of Jacob; he will get through the world. He has a clear head and everything right behind the ears." He was then a stout, strong lad of seventeen, exceedingly well made, though slightly undersized, and he had a clear, composed, intelligent look in the eyes, which seemed to ratify the prediction of the schoolmaster. On the fourteenth day after leaving home our youth found himself at a Dutch seaport, with a larger sum of money than he ever before possessed. He took passage for London, where he landed a few days after, in total ignorance of the place and the language. His brother welcomed him with German warmth, and assisted him to procure employment—probably in the flute and piano manufactory of Astor & B. & Wood.

IN LONDON. Astor brought to London, according to our quaint Lutherans, "a pious, true and godly spirit, a clear understanding, a sound youthful elbow-grease, and a wish to put it to good use." During the two years of his residence in the British metropolis, he strove most assiduously for three objects: First, to save money; second, to acquire the English language; third, to get information respecting America. In September, 1783, he possessed a good suit of Sunday clothes, in the English style, and about fifteen English guineas—the total result of two years of unremitting toil and most pinching economy; and here again charity requires the remark that, as Astor, the millionaire, carried the virtue of economy to an extreme, it was Astor, the struggling youth in a strange land, who learned the value of money.

He paid five of his guineas for a passage in the steamer which entitled him to sailors' fare of salt beef and biscuit. He invested part of his remaining capital in seven flutes, and carried the rest, about five-pounds sterling, in the form of money.

HIS ARRIVAL IN AMERICA.

America gave a cold welcome to the young emigrant. He arrived in New York with little more than his German flutes, and a long German head full of available knowledge and quiet determination. He went straight to the humble abode of his brother Henry, a kindly, generous, jovial soul, who gave him a truly fraternal welcome, and received with hospitable warmth a friendly companion of his voyage who had explained to young Astor during the trip the advantages of entering the fur business, and the ease with which money could be made in it. During the first evening of his brother's stay at his house the question was discussed. What should the young man do in his new country? The charms of the fur business were duly portrayed by the friend of the youth, who also expressed his preference for it. So, the next day, the brothers and their friend proceeded together to the store of Robert Brown, an aged and benevolent Quaker, long established in the business of buying, curing and exporting peltries. It chanced that he needed a hand. Pleased with the appearance and demeanor of the young man, he employed him (as tradition reports) at two dollars a week and his board. Astor took up his abode in his master's house, and was soon at work. We can tell with certainty what was the nature of the youth's first day's work in his adopted country; for, in his old age he was often heard to say that the first thing he did for Mr. Brown was to beat the furs, which, indeed, was his principal employment during the whole of the following summer—furs requiring to be frequently beaten to keep the moths from destroying them. In those days a considerable number of bear skins and beaver skins were brought directly to Brown's store by the Indians and countrymen of the vicinity, who had shot or trapped the animals. These men Astor questioned, and neglected no other opportunity of procuring the information he desired. It used to be observed of Astor that he absolutely loved a fine skin. In later days he would have a superior fur hung up in his counting room as other men hang pictures, and this, apparently, for the mere pleasure of feeling, showing and admiring it. He would pass his hand fondly over it, extolling its charms with an approach to enthusiasm; not, however, forgetting to mention that in Canton he would bring him in \$500. So heartily did he throw himself into his business.

IN BUSINESS ON HIS OWN ACCOUNT.

John Jacob Astor remained not long in the employment of Robert Brown. It was a peculiarity of the business of a furrier at that day, that, while it admitted of unlimited extension, it could be begun on the smallest scale, with a very insignificant capital. In a little shop in Water street, with a back room, a yard and a shed, the shop furnished with only a few toys and trinkets, Astor began business on the year 1786. In 1790, seven years after his arrival in this city, he was of sufficient importance to appear in the directory thus: Astor, J. J., Fur Trader, 40 Little Dock street (now a part of Water street). In 1800 he was worth a quarter of a million dollars. In 1794 he appears in the directory as "Furrier, 149 Broadway." From 1796 to 1799 he figures as "Fur Merchant, 149 Broadway." In 1800 he had a storehouse at 141 Greenwich street, and lived at 223 Broadway, on the site of the present Astor house. In 1801, his store was at 71 Liberty street, and he had removed his residence back to 149 Broadway. The year following we find him again at 223 Broadway, where he continued to reside for a quarter of a century. His house was such as a first-rate merchant would now consider much beneath his dignity. Mr. Astor, indeed, had a singular dislike to living in a large house. He had neither expensive tastes nor wasteful vices. His luxuries were a pipe, a glass of beer, a game of draughts, a ride on horseback and the theatre. Of the theatre he was particularly fond. He seldom missed a performance in the palmy days of the "Old Park."

ASTOR OVER REACHED BY A SHIP CAPTAIN.

We have all heard much of the closeness, or rather the meanness, of this remarkable man. Truth compels us to admit, as we have before intimated, that he was not generous, except to his own kindred. His liberality began and ended right in his own family. It is a pleasure to know that sometimes his extreme closeness defeated his own object. He once lost \$70,000 by committing a piece of petty injustice toward his best Captain. The gallant sailor, being notified by an insurance office of the necessity of having a chronometer on board his ship, spoke to Mr. Astor on the subject, who advised the Captain to buy one. "But," said the Captain, "I have no \$500 to spare for such a purpose; the chronometer ought to belong to the ship." Astor insisting on his own view of the matter, the Captain was so profoundly disgusted, that, important as the command of the ship was to him, he resigned his post. Another Captain was soon found, and the ship sailed for China. Another house, which was then engaged in the China trade, knowing the worth of this "king of captains," as Astor himself used to style him, bought him a ship and dispatched him to Canton two months after the departure of the first vessel. Our Captain, put upon his mettle, employed all his skill to accelerate the speed of his ship, and had such success, that he reached New York with a full cargo of tea just seven days after the arrival of Mr. Astor's ship. Astor not expecting another ship for months, and, therefore, sure of monopolizing the

market, had not yet yet broken bulk, nor even taken off the hatchways. Our Captain arrived on a Saturday. Advertisements and hand bills were immediately issued, and on the Wednesday morning following, as the custom then was, the auction sale of the tea began on the wharf, two barrels of punch contributing to the eclat and hilarity of the occasion. The cargo was sold to good advantage, Astor lost in consequence the entire profits of the voyage, not less than the sum named above. Meeting the Captain some time after in Broadway, he said:

"I had better have paid for that chronometer of yours." Without ever acknowledging that he had been in the wrong, he was glad enough to engage the Captain's future services.

A SECRET OF THE SUCCESS OF ASTOR.

The reader may be curious to know by what means Mr. Astor became so preposterously rich. Few successful men gain a single million by legitimate commerce. A million dollars is a most enormous sum of money. It requires a considerable effort of the mind to conceive it. But this indomitable little German managed, in the course of sixty years, to accumulate twenty millions, of which, probably, not more than two millions was the fruit of his business as a fur trader and China merchant. A fair profit on a voyage to China at that day was thirty thousand dollars. Mr. Astor has been known to gain seventy thousand, and to have his money in his pocket within the year. He was remarkably lucky in the war of 1812. All his ships escaped capture, and arriving at a time when foreign commerce was almost annihilated and tea had doubled in price, his gains were immense. But it was neither his tea trade nor his fur trade that gave Astor twenty millions of dollars. It was his sagacity in investing his profits that made him the richest man in America. When he first trod the streets of New York, in 1784, the city was a snug, leafy place of twenty-five thousand inhabitants, situated at the extremity of the island, mostly below Courtland street. In 1800, when he began to have money to invest, the city had more than double in population, and had advanced nearly a mile up the island. Now, Astor was a shrewd calculator of the future. No reason appeared why New York should not repeat this doubling again, and this mile of extension every fifteen years. He acted upon the supposition, and fell into the habit of buying lands and lots just beyond the verge of the city.

THE FOUNDING OF ASTORIA.

The crowning glory of Mr. Astor's mercantile career was that vast and brilliant enterprise which Washington Irving has commemorated in "Astoria." No other single individual has ever set on foot a scheme so extensive, so difficult, and so costly as this; nor has any such enterprise been carried out with such sustained energy and perseverance. To establish a line of trading-posts from St. Louis to the Pacific, a four months' journey in a land of wilderness, prairie, mountain and desert, inhabited by treacherous and hostile savages—to found a permanent settlement on the Pacific coast as the grand depot of furs and supplies—to arrange a plan by which the furs collected should be regularly transported to China, and the ships return to New York laden with tea and silks, and then proceed once more to the Pacific coast to repeat the circuit to maintain all the parts of his scheme without the expectation of any but a remote profit, sending ship after ship before any certain intelligence of the first ventures had arrived—this was an enterprise which had been memorable if it had been undertaken by a wealthy corporation or a powerful government, instead of a private merchant unaided by any resources but his own. In every man's mind, the thought of this magnificent attempt, Mr. Astor appears the great man. His parting instructions to the captain of his first ship call to mind those of General Washington to St. Clair on a similar occasion. "All the accidents that have yet happened from too much confidence in the Indians," the ship was lost, a year warning. When the news reached New York of the massacre of the crew and the blowing up of the ship, the man who flew into a passion at seeing a little boy drop a wine glass, behaved with a composure that was the theme of general admiration. He attended the theatre the same evening, and entered heartily into the play. Mr. Irving relates that a friend having expressed surprise at this, Mr. Astor replied:

"What would you have me do? Would you have me stay at home and weep for what I cannot help?" The war of 1812 foiled the enterprise. "But for that war," Mr. Astor used to say, "I should have been the richest man that ever lived." He expected to go on expending money for several years, and then to gain a steady annual profit of millions.

He was an active business man in the city for about forty-six years—from his twenty-first to his sixty-seventh year. Toward the year 1830 he began to withdraw from business and undertook no new enterprises except such as the investment of his income involved. His three daughters were married. His son and heir was a man of thirty. Having retired from business, Mr. Astor determined to fulfill a vow of his youth and build in Broadway a house larger and costlier than any it could then boast. Behold the result in the Astor House, which remains to this day one of our most solid, imposing and respectable structures. The ground on which the hotel stands was covered with substantial three-story brick houses, one of which Astor himself occupied, and it was thought at the time a wasteful and rash proceeding to destroy them. It was at this time he removed to a wide two-story brick house opposite Niblo's, the front door of which bore a large silver plate, exhibiting to awe struck passers-by the words: "Mr.

Astor." Soon after the hotel was finished he made a present of it to his oldest son, or, in legal language, he sold it to him for the sum of one dollar, "to him in hand paid." On the 20th of March, 1833, of old age merely, in the presence of his family and friends, without pain or disquiet, this remarkable man breathed his last. He was buried in a vault in the church of St. Thomas in Broadway. Though he expressly declared in his will that he was a member of the Reformed German Congregation, no clergyman of that church took part in the services of his funeral. The unusual number of six Episcopal Doctors of Divinity assisted at the ceremony. A bishop could have scarcely expected a more distinguished funeral homage. Such a thing it is in a commercial city to die worth twenty millions. The pall-bearers were Washington Irving, Philip Hone, Sylvanus Miller, James C. King, Isaac Bell, David B. Ogden, Thomas J. Oakley, Ramsey Crooks and Jacob B. Taylor.

THE ASTORS OF TO-DAY.

John Jacob left money to two public institutions—\$400,000 to found the Astor library, which now contains the most valuable collection of books in America, and \$50,000 for an orphanage in his native village of Waldorf. This orphanage, called the Astor house, was opened in 1854. Of his twenty millions in money and real estate, four-fifths went to his son William B., his other son not being of sound mind. William B. Astor died in 1875 and left two sons, John Jacob and William B. Astor. John Jacob is the present head of the family—a portly, red-faced man of fifty, very much like an Englishman in appearance, who may be seen walking down to business and back every day. He never goes into society, or to an opera, devoting himself body and soul to the increase of that big fortune for which his grandfather toiled. His only child is William Waldorf Astor, a young man of thirty, and our present minister to Rome. William B. Astor is a man of the world, a fustian, and his wife and many daughters lead the ultra-fashionable and conservative set of the city. He does not concern himself much with business, leaving that to his brother. Among the persons who have married daughters of the Astor family and have become rich in consequence, are the Langdons, Roosevelts, Draytons, Boreels, Channers, Bristeds, Carrys and other well-known New Yorkers.

AN INCOME OF MILLIONS.

In 1875, when William B. Astor died, he had 720 houses on his rental. The present number of the Astor houses exceeds 1,200, the whole estate being valued at about fifty millions, producing an income of three millions a year.

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Rheumatism, Neuralgia, Sciatica, Lumbago, Backache, Headache, Toothache, Sore Throat, Sprain, Burns, Bruises, and ALL OTHER BODILY PAINS AND ACRES.

Sold by Druggists and Dealers everywhere. Fifty Cents a Bottle.

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Hay, Oats, and Straw.

Lime, Brick, Cement and Sand

Wood Delivered to Order.

Draying, Teaming and Express Business.

Horses and Carriages for Hire.

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FIRST CLASS

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IN LOT TO SUIT, FR. 5 ACRES TO 40 acre tract in S. W. corner of Chas. Stevens' D. C. title perfect. For particulars inquire at office of S. V. Raymond, City Hall; or on the premises of O. D. Young, Astoria, Nov. 24, 1883.

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PARKER HOUSE,

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A. CROSBY, Day Clerk.
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Jas. DUFFY has the Bar and Billiard room.

First Class in all Respects.
FREE COACH TO THE HOUSE.

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Concomly Street is the Best in Town.

He has Always on Hand FRESH Shell Water Bay and Eastern Oysters.

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RESTAURANT

In the city, and he will guarantee to give the best meal for cash.

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ALSO:

Leave Portland for	Mon	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
Astoria and lower Co.	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM
Dayton, Or	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM
Victoria, B. C.	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM
Victoria, B. C.	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM	7 AM

Oregon & California R. R

OREGON & TRANSCONTINENTAL COMPANY, LESSEE.

On and after Dec. 21, 1883, trains will run as follows: DAILY (except Sundays).

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LEAVE PORTLAND 7:30 A. M. GRANT'S PASS 1:30 P. M. PORTLAND 5:30 A. M. PORTLAND 4:30 P. M.

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Connecting by stages and boats for Oysterville, Montesano and Olympia.

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At 7 A. M.

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