

EARLY OREGON HISTORY

Another Installment of Oregon History As Told at Cornerstone Laying

(Continued from last week)

During the "Oregon Controversy," writers, editors, members of both Houses of Congress, all who discussed the subject, differed very much in their opinion of what Oregon was, or what she was good for. Some said that Oregon was a barren, sandy waste, here and there dotted with a few clumps of chaparral brush, the shelter of a poor rabbit or two; too worthless a country to fight over. Some said that Oregon was tropical, beautiful in the extreme, a spot where figs, citrons, lemons, spices and melons, could be raised in great profusion. Others thought that this region was at the end of the world; that it was sterile, and without water or rain, while Lewis and Clark reported after their exploration of the Columbia river, that during the winter months they were nearly drowned out. It was claimed that it was adapted to the raising of sugar and cotton. One learned Senator, in a flight of eloquence, exclaimed, "Let England possess Nootka Sound, the finest harbor in the world, commanding as it does the Straits of Fuca, and consequently the access to Puget's Sound, and she has all of Oregon worth possessing in a commercial and maritime point of view. She would hold the Straits of Fuca and Puget's Sound as securely as the trap holds a mouse. There is no harbor below that would give shelter to a fleet of canoes." We read that the first mention which history gives of Oregon is furnished by the Jesuit fathers, "to whom the world is indebted for its early knowledge of the interior of North America," who seeing the waters of a thousand lakes, held in equilibrium on a vast plateau in the center of the continent, from which three great rivers went off, north, south and east to the Atlantic, and hearing the Indians speak of a river of the west called in their language "Oregon," naturally sketched an "Oregon" from Lake Winnipeg to the Pacific, still to be seen on some old maps. They were right in the conjecture as to the existence of the river, thought mistaken as to its source. Nearly seventy years ago it was written by Humboldt that the banks of the Columbia presented the only region on the Northwest coast of America fit for the residence of a civilized people. How little was then known of Oregon, and how little is now known of our State outside of its own borders? Much less is now known of Oregon in the eastern states than when the Senate of the United States stood appalled at the wonderful efforts of Hon. T. B. Benton, in behalf of our claim to this Territory. To serve Oregon was the pride of his life. This was during the Oregon Controversy, nearly thirty years ago, when over eighty eloquent speeches were made by different members of Congress in support of the claim of the United States to this region. The people were aroused. Oregon was the theme of the orator and the journalist. It is true, that in that case, as in all exciting controversies, much was said that appears now to be a little extravagant; but in the main, the facts were presented with such power that Oregon became then known to some extent and favorably considered throughout the United States. Long prior to this event, to use a fact of history, President Jefferson, "that man of rare endowments, followed up the grand idea of Columbus, and, taking up the unfinished enterprise of LaSalle, and, anxious to crowd into his administration a galaxy of brilliant events, early projected the discovery of an inland route to the Pacific Ocean. The Missouri river was to be one connecting link in the chain of communication; the Columbia or any other that might serve the purpose on the west side of the mountains was to be another. Lewis and Clark were sent out to discover a commercial route to the Pacific Ocean. So judiciously was their enterprise conducted that their return route must remain the route of commerce, in latitude 48 degrees."

This great idea in later days was seized upon by Col. Benton, and he advocated the opening of this new route to Asia. He it was who insisted that we should have all Oregon, because of right it belonged to the United States, and who labored to obtain that for his country which Great Britain was seeking to gain, that is to say, an outlet from the shores of the Pacific to Asia. He wished to connect the Missouri with the Columbia river, and thus to throw open a great natural highway to the Pacific Ocean and thence to Eastern Asia. His Thebes, no doubt, would have been on the Columbia or Willamette, his Tyre at St. Louis, Missouri. This was the hope of his better days. He foresaw the greatness of Oregon from her geographical position, and her importance in the new commercial era dawning upon our country. The trade

of the East has always been the "richest jewel in the diadem of commerce." Leading nations in all ages have sought it as essential to their progress, and those that have obtained it have attained the highest degree of grandeur in history. These errors differ, however, from that class of misstatements which have method in their arrangement, and whose plausible features are presented in an apparent spirit of fairness in order to give them force. These are misleading and mischievous. They must be met by an array of incontrovertible facts as they arise from our experience; facts with which the world must be made acquainted. These facts will be evidences from within to the world without our borders of our growth and power.

As to the errors to which we have alluded, the history of Oregon is but an example of what the world has often witnessed. That man will never understand the truth of history who is not well informed upon the personal feelings, and capable of making allowance for personal errors of the great actors in the drama of nations. Think for a moment of the gratification of Columbus when he discovered the coast of Venezuela and declared it to be the hope of his life, the paradise he was seeking, a Northwest passage to the Orient. But this delusion was afterwards dissipated by Balboa. Columbus hoped to reach Eastern Asia, by his course westward, and thought he had found the treasures of the East. What must have been the unbounded enthusiasm of Henry VII, after he had granted a license to the Cabots to open a northwest passage to Asia, to learn that Newfoundland and other islands had been discovered by them, and their possession secured as outlying islands of China and Japan. Time and subsequent explorations have corrected this error. Another instance of the same sort is the fact that not a century ago, about the time when Lewis and Clark were making their celebrated exploration of the grand Columbia river, the members of a learned society in Europe were sitting in judgment upon America, and their verdict was, that seriously it was a question whether, on the whole, the discovery of America had been to advantage to the world. Evidently they had learned that China was in Venezuela, and that Japan was in Newfoundland!

Is it strange, then, that Oregon is comparatively unknown abroad? Her explorers, her trappers and her traders knew but little of her wonderful resources. Before the settlement of California, Oregon was the terminus of western civilization. To-day, by many in distant parts, and, perhaps, by some in that State, she is supposed to be a county in California. We were once asked off the coast of that State, by a professional gentleman traveling round the world, if Oregon was an uninhabited region near the White Pine mines. Near the capital of this nation, but a few years ago, we were asked if wheat could be raised in Oregon, at a time when our flour was selling at a premium in the markets of the East! Purchasers are usually contented with the article purchased; they never ask whence it comes; and so it is with those who purchase Oregon flour in distant markets—they never inquire where it is obtained—they care not whence it comes. Hence it is that those who purchase the products of our State, as well as those of whom Oregon purchases, are almost entirely ignorant of her resources and interests. The money they make in the trade is all that is visible or valuable to them. Oregon has exported without having the name of an exporter. Her products have gone into the markets of the world accredited to others; while those whom she has enriched have not respected her even for what she has done. For the sake of policy it has been deemed essential to success by jobbers and middle men, to destroy all rivalry in commerce, not only to put upon their purchases a false name, to facilitate, as they claim, the sale of the article, but also to belittle the pretensions of Oregon. Thus our State has stood a beggar, literally, in another market even with all her gold. When she parted with that, she did it as a slave parts with his last farthing. She has passed up and down the Bosphorus, so to speak, for over thirty years and has paid dear tribute to thousands for things which none could produce or manufacture better than herself. This tribute money is paid to those who appreciate her gold, and nothing more. Shall we ask, when will our State be free from the crushing exactions of our present policy of purchasing everything abroad? When will she turn her attention to the development of her own abundant resources? If to add to the wealth of other States, by exporting our gold for articles of food and raiment, for the implements of husbandry, in short, for everything we use, almost, except the air we breathe, is required of a new State like this, let us feel now that the time of our servitude is up, and that capital shall come to the relief of our people and raise up all the aids needed to make our State a manufacturing as well as a producing one. This is demanded of us, not only as being vital

of opulence, refinement and power." We have alluded to some errors committed by the friends of Oregon. These are common when men are actuated by an unrestrained enthusiasm. Evidences of this fact are abundant to our advancement in population and wealth, but also as being absolutely necessary for the welfare of our young men who need to be trained in a knowledge of the various branches of industry.

(To be continued next week)

Brewster Valley

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wilson and family, of Marshfield, spent the week-end at the C. M. Wilson home. Jack Grove, who has been working at Powers, is home for a couple of weeks.

John Kirkup, of Bandon, spent Thursday at the Crowley home. Mrs. Julius Benham and Mrs. Ernest Krewson attended the Pollyanna Club at McKinley Thursday.

Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Nickason and daughter, Betty, were business callers in Coquille and Myrtle Point Wednesday.

Rex Dicks, who is working for Mr. Jenkins, spent Thursday at his home in Camas Valley.

Mr. and Mrs. Jake Bohlander were visitors in the valley Friday.

Clarice Benidiet and Marion Nickels, of Roseburg, spent the week-end at the Jess Hicks home.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Myers, of Coquille, spent Sunday at the Jenkins home.

E. W. Riggs and Bob Taylor and family, of Marshfield, spent Saturday at the Albert Christensen home.

A picnic dinner was held at the Elmer Wilson home Sunday. Those to attend the picnic were Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Nickason and daughters, Betty and Fern, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Laird and children, Meri and Lila Mae, Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Ted Miller and Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wilson and family, of Marshfield.

Mr. and Mrs. Claud Patchen, Cecile Patchen and Vera Robison, of Drain, were visitors Sunday at the Krewson home.

Mrs. Eva McClure and grandchildren, Buster and Belrose Ambrose, of Marshfield spent Friday at the Krewson home.

Mr. and Mrs. Pinkston, of Coquille, visited recently at the Ivan Laird home.

Mrs. C. O. King and Mr. and Mrs. Parks, of Fairview, and Mrs. Clara Corduary, of Millington, spent Monday at the J. D. Laird home. Mrs. Corduary will visit a few days with Mrs. Laird before returning home.

Ben Robison cut his hand on a wood saw Friday. Joe Fills is helping him with his chores.

Mrs. Albert Christensen, Christina Christensen and Hazel Durrell were business callers in Coquille and Myrtle Point Monday.

Bill Westrope and Norleigh Alford, of Creswell, Oregon, were visitors in the valley Monday.

Bridge Happenings

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Huff, of Redmond, who have been visiting here since June 10, have gone this week to Charleston to spend a couple of weeks with Mrs. Ferris. Mr. and Mrs. Huff lived for a number of years in this community, moving in June of last year to Redmond. They have been visiting here with their sons, Henry and John, and families and also with many friends.

Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Culver and family spent Sunday at Gaylord, at the home of Mrs. Culver's brother, Chas. Knight.

Clarence E. Ellison and Orville Rice left last week for Denver, Colo., where Mr. Ellison will attend a meeting of the National Educational Association. They planned to stop at a number of places enroute for short visits with friends and relatives.

Mrs. Hattie Hatcher, who is spending a few weeks in Coquille under a doctor's care, was at home the past

week-end, returning to Coquille Monday. She is feeling better now.

Fred Corpe and son, Bernard, and Chas. Mack were Coquille visitors Wednesday.

Mrs. W. R. Brown, a teacher in the local school, left last week to spend the summer vacation in California with her husband.

Charles Mack, Jr., has been suffering with a severe attack of tonsillitis and was in the Mast Hospital at Myrtle Point for a short time last week. He is better now, though not well yet.

Ray L. Beckett, who is employed near Charleston, was at home from Saturday until Tuesday.

At the annual school meeting Monday evening Arthur Gates was elected clerk and Chas. Mack, director. Mrs. Matilda Hill, who has been very ill with heart trouble, is able to sit up a short time each day now.

Mrs. Mary Lund and son, Ted, of Marshfield, were Sunday guests at

the home of Mrs. Lund's sister, Mrs. Chas. Mack.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold E. James and Mrs. Dwight Culver were Powers visitors Monday.

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