

# Rogue River Courier.

VOL. XX.

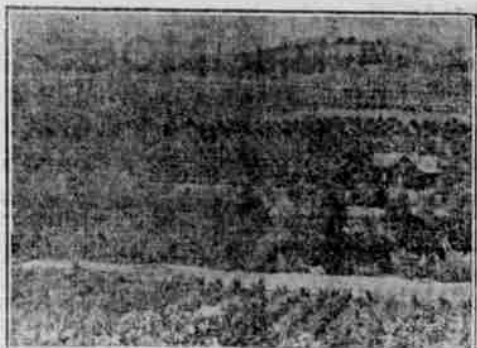
GRANTS PASS, JOSEPHINE COUNTY, OREGON, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1904.

No. 35.

## THE CLIMATE OF SOUTHERN OREGON

The Average Rainfall of Grants Pass Is Less Than That of Many of the Eastern Cities.

Kind Reader: I am asked by the publisher of the Courier to give you a description of the climate of Southern Oregon and I commence the task, realizing that it is one that has its difficulties. It is a simple matter to write a description of our climate, that is, one of the dry, matter of fact kind, one sees so often, but to write so that you will see things as they are, see them through the eyes of the



ROGUE RIVER VALLEY-VINEYARD.

writer, so to speak, is what is needed and is difficult.

Any person who has always lived east of the Rockies, must understand at the outset that "coming to Oregon" will be like landing upon a new planet, so far as weather conditions are concerned. I have known farmers from Eastern states to reach here in the fall of spring, buy or rent a farm and imagine they would have no difficulty, since they had followed farming all their lives, in going right on with eastern methods. They had read many times that Oregon has, roughly speaking, but two seasons, a wet and dry, but they had not grasped the meaning of the expression and when, as they were rushing their work along, they all at once realized that it had not rained a particle in four or five weeks, they began to look serious and anxiously search the sky for signs of rain.

They were simply learning by experience, the lesson that should have been learned by accepting the experience of others. Life in Oregon is pleasant and profitable when

consisting of the fall rains, when nature puts on her coat of green and in a few weeks one can hardly believe it is the same landscape that greeted the eye in August.

The famous "Oregon rain" that eastern people have been led to believe keeps pouring constantly from the heavens, is a byword that vanishes on acquaintance with this beautiful region. We have rain here, surely, couldn't do business without it, but the popular belief many have concerning the matter, is a fallacy. We very seldom have such long and severe storms as are seen every year in the state of New York. I am jotting down these items on the evening of Nov. 14, and 11 of these November days have been days with no rainfall whatever. It might be of interest to give the precipitation for the last few months. Beginning with June we had .35 of an inch, July, .34 inch, August, a mere trace, September, .40 inch, then in October we had 2.29 inches, and in these 14 days for November we have had .77 inch, this amount being the total of the



BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

you search out the location and conditions that are adapted to your occupation. While in Eastern states the soil freezes solid from two to four or more feet in depth, here in Western Oregon, it is very seldom that you cannot force the blade of a spade into the ground its full length any day throughout the winter. Of course this is not an invariable rule, but as stated it is nearly always true. No instance has ever come to my knowledge in the 15 years that I have lived in Josephine county where farming or other enterprises were delayed at any time of the year, by frost. An individual, in thoroughly appreciating this fact, has only to have lived in any of the states east of the Rockies from Colorado to Maine, where it is generally impossible to stir the soil for any purpose whatever, from November to April.

Another peculiarity of the climate here is the fact that, no matter how warm it has been in the most sultry summer day, the thermometer generally shows a rapidly cooling temperature as night approaches. Memory carries me back to the time of my boyhood in Eastern New York and the years I have spent on the frontier in Nebraska; and the recollection of

three days on which showers occurred. The average annual rainfall for Grants Pass for the last 10 years is only 32.22, while the annual amount of precipitation at numerous eastern points is very nearly the same. Just to show the absurdity of the popular belief concerning Oregon rainfall or at least that part of the state known as "Southern Oregon", a comparative table is given here, showing the precipitation for Grants Pass for the years 1902 and 1903 and also that at various points throughout the Eastern states for same years:

	1902	1903
Albany, N. Y.	37.45	34.09
Oswego, N. Y.	37.87	39.65
Beaumont, N. Y.	32.91	37.95
Rochester, N. Y.	29.73	39.44
Philadelphia, Pa.	49.76	41.59
Washington, D. C.	46.05	48.55
Cincinnati, O.	37.30	34.69
GRANTS PASS, OR	29.12	36.19
St. Paul, Minn.	31.75	37.85
St. Louis, Mo.	38.43	33.41
Cleveland, N.Y.	30.45	33.43
Chicago, Ill.	37.58	28.09

These figures are taken from the official report of the U. S. Weather Bureau and can be verified by calling upon any observer who has these reports.

Thus it is seen that our rainfall is less than some, and slightly more than others of the cities named.

About 12 to 20 degrees above zero

## GRANTS PASS - ITS PAST AND PRESENT.

usually marks the bottom point for the thermometer during the winter and for but one or two periods, of a day or two each, and it is a fact that now, while the papers are telling us of a fearful blizzard raging in the East during the past week, here everything is serene and pleasant, showers are falling, interspersed with hours or days of sunshine, green verdure covers hill and vale in every direction and flowers are blooming upon our lawns.

Speaking of blizzards reminds me to say a good word concerning the winds of Oregon. Southern Oregon is not a windy region. If there is a country where gentle zephyrs blow, this is the place. We have occasional high winds, lasting on rare occasions for two or three days, but the great majority of the days throughout the year, when there is any wind, it is quite light and too often fails to turn the few wind mills our citizens have ventured to erect.

Do we have snow here? Well,

Thirty years ago, Grants Pass was not. A few scattered cabins dotted the valleys of what is now Josephine county. The red man built his wigwam by the clear waters of Rogue river and speared the salmon in its shallows. Red shirted, picturesque miners made "big money" with shovel, sluice and rocker in the channels of Althouse and Josephine creeks. Rough and ready packers transported all supplies over the trail from Crescent City. Half wild cattle grazed in the valleys and browsed on the park like hillsides, for the timber then was "open" with little undergrowth.

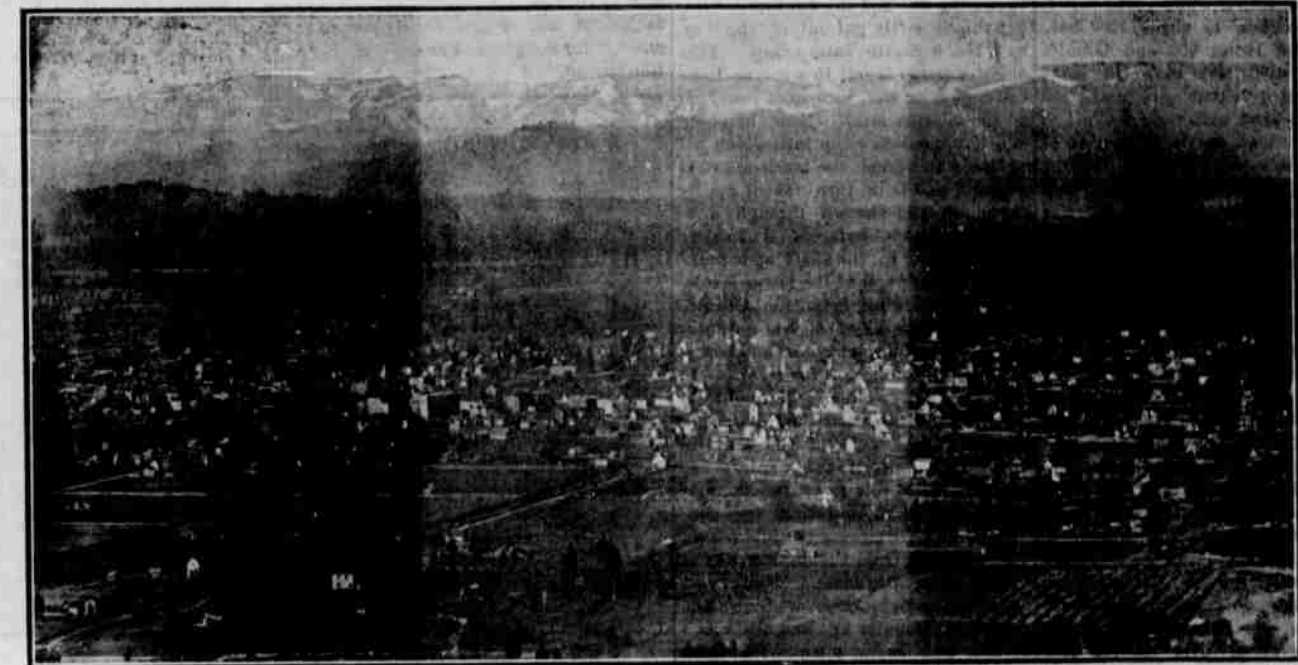
Thirty years ago, Grants Pass was a wayside stage station. Twice every day the cumbersome "thoroughbraces" coaches rolled in drawn by six horses in charge of a dazed driver. This was "Old Grants Pass." It was located one mile north of the present town site. It had a road house, a stage barn, little store and later a blacksmith shop. It was a quiet,

height of its development. Now and then some daring prospect, speaking more in jest than earnest, would assert the possibility that sometime a railroad might be built through the country. He was generally ridiculed into silence.

Twenty-one years ago, this month, the present town of Grants Pass was born, a row of shacks and tents facing a jungle of brush; one of the many little towns springing up along the line of the O. & C. railroad, then pushing through to California. As soon as the depot site was marked out, it was used by a line of rough, unpainted, hastily erected structures. The first store in Grants Pass was that of J. W. Howard, on the southwest corner of Sixth and G streets. On the opposite corner, the southwest, the next store was erected by H. B. Miller & Co. G. W. Riddle opened a stock of goods in a tent further down Front street. These were the pioneer merchants. A row of wooden shacks sprang up, quickly and a solid business front of

Early in 1885, the Grants Pass Courier was founded by J. H. Stine. After a few issues, a partnership was formed between Mr. Stine and W. J. Wimer and the name of the paper was changed to the Rogue River Courier. The Oregon Observer was founded in 1892 and the Oregon Mining Journal in 1896. Grants Pass was originally in Jackson county, but in 1885 the legislature set off a portion of a range of townships and annexed them to Josephine. The county seat was removed from Kelsey to Grants Pass in June 1885. The town at this time contained some 500 or 600 inhabitants. While some believed in a bright future for the place, the idea prevailed very largely among the populace that it had attained its full growth. "What is there here?" they asked, "to keep up a town of this size? It will be as dead as a door nail in two years more."

"Knockers," of whom we still have a few, were then in the hey-day of their ascendancy. The resources of



VIEW OF GRANTS PASS LOOKING DOWN THE VALLEY.

yes, we have snow, that is, enough to prevent eastern people from forgetting how it looks. We have no sleighs or cutters in the city, but I venture to say that we have many people to town, who, if they saw a cutter would not know what it was. Our snow falls for the last two winters at this place have been from one inch to six or eight inches at a time, quickly melting on account of the warm earth. The total snowfall for last two winters combined amounts to 22 inches, 20 inches falling last winter and 12 inches the winter before.

The only thing lacking to make this an ideal country, is rain through the summer months. Grants Pass is one thing and I believe there would not be a more perfect spot on earth. Man, however, is learning that if rain is denied him from the clouds when he sorely needs it, he must use that which has fallen and is stored up in the earth. Irrigation is an art that is in its infancy, but is today coming rapidly to the front in importance, even in countries where there is usually a sufficiency of rainfall. The Rogue River (or "Gold river," as it used to be called) is now crossed by two large dams, both on the up river side of the city and will soon be in shape to furnish water in abundance for all possible requirements, thus practically releasing us from the grasp of the dry season. Many other irrigation systems are being put in, some deriving the water supply by means of ditches or pumping plants, from streams that flow the year around, or from natural springs or from artificial springs made by tunneling into the heads of ravines. With these various methods, it is possible to irrigate the greater part of Rogue River Valley and to make it one of the garden spots of the Pacific coast, for its soil is fertile and the climatic conditions perfect for the growth of vegetation.

Southern Oregon's climate gives health and wealth to its people and fully deserves all the good words that is said of it, but prospective settlers must bear in mind that it is not a perfect climate, for such an attribute of Paradise does not exist on this rugged old globe of ours.

United States Weather Bureau observer for Grants Pass.

sleepy place, waking up twice a day, when the stage came in. The old stage barn is still standing. Roseburg was the terminus of the railroad and supplies for all Rogue river valley were hauled from that point by big freight teams drawing two and three wagons, with jangling bells screeching brakes and shouting drivers that might be heard for miles. Deer grazed at night in grain fields and gardens and now and then a bear would pick up a luckless shot within

stores, saloons, hotels and restaurants stretched along Front street. The sidewalk in front of every building had its own grade and to walk down the street at night was an undertaking full of peril to neck and limb.

A schoolhouse of two rooms was built and school was opened in the spring of 1884 with one teacher, though the educational force was increased to two teachers before the end of the term.

About this time a threatening rival

the county were dormant but were discussed by the men who had eyes to see.

The mining industry at this time was of rather small proportions. A few grants were at work on some of the creeks and at Waldo and Galice, bigger mines were operating. Quartz prospectors began to be busy in the hills and to bring in samples of rock which caused the sanguine to prophesy a bright future in the quartz industry. Such predictions were generally laughed to scorn by the know no nothing.

About this time the S. P. D. & L. Co. was formed, absorbing the interests of H. B. Miller & Co. and the foundations were laid for a big lumber manufacturing industry in Grants Pass and which now gives employment to a large number of men.

Fifteen years ago Grants Pass had reached the "gawky" awkward stage of its growth. It spread out over the whole creation and occupied as much space on the map as it does today. Wide vacant spaces appeared between the dwellings and streets, outside the business portion, were indistinguishable. But the youngster was beginning to be strong and vigorous with the health of enterprise. The population at that time was somewhat near 1000.

The mining industry at that time was the victim of the unemerged capitalist, bonding pirates who held up the owner without "value received." Hydraulic mining was well established but quartz mining was confined mainly to surface scratching, there being a lack of capital for true development.

The Grants Pass of today is a city of 4500 people, with solid and substantial brick business blocks and handsome residences, good sewer and water system, electric lights, manufacturing, and is growing with remarkable rapidity. Instead of the two room schoolhouse of 1884, there are now three good school buildings, requiring a corps of 18 instructors.

The quartz industry has settled to progress on solid foundations. Men with money have acquired possession of good properties and have demonstrated their worth. Some 40 quartz mills are operating in the country and the industry is only in its extreme youth. The possibilities are stupendous.

With one of the most pleasant climates in the world, the most beautiful town site in Oregon, the biggest tributary district in Southern Oregon, immensely rich in mineral, timber and agricultural resources, Grants Pass cannot be other than the metropolis and trade center of Southern Oregon.

several blocks of Front street may also be repaired. Another improvement in keeping with a progressive town is the lighting of the business streets with electric lights, that needed improvement having been ordered at the last meeting of the city council and within the next month the present incandescent lights will be replaced with 3000 candle power arc lights. The street lighting in the residence districts, now covering more than a mile square of territory, is to be extended, giving the city a street lighting system not excelled by any other town of 5000 population on the Pacific Coast. The water system covers the entire city and gives ample



JOSEPHINE COUNTY HOP FIELD.

Grants Pass had a growth in 1903 and 1904 that the wisecracks declared was a boom and surely would collapse, but the boom, if it was a boom, did not collapse and the town continued to grow and 1904 witnessed a greater growth than for either the preceding years and now it is generally conceded that 1905 will bring a still greater growth and a more substantial prosperity than that of any previous year in the history of the town.

A count shows more than 150 building and residences that have been completed or are in course of erection, this year. All are of good character and many would be in place in the better sections of any of the large cities of this Coast. The class of buildings to be erected in 1905 is quite certain to be of a higher character than those of previous years for as a town grows it attracts large investors and warrants large investments in both business and residence property.

Grants Pass is by the one and two story business block period and now the three story blocks have come and the several that the town has are proving good investments to the owners and such is the value of frontage on the main business streets and the readiness with which tenants can be had for large, modern buildings that in the four and more story blocks will

service for fire protection, domestic and irrigation use and for the steam plants of factories. The telephone flourishes in Grants Pass as in hardly another town in Oregon of its size, and all the business blocks and most of the residences are supplied with this modern necessity.

The religious, fraternal, educational and social life in Grants Pass is strong and exerts a wholesome influence for the upbuilding of the town along lines that tend to give a spirit of morality, brotherhood, intellectuality and contentment that makes this city a most desirable place of residence. In the ambitious, energetic, hustler, landable persistence and better sections of its citizens, Grants Pass has been likened to Spokane, and well it deserves the compliment for no town on the Pacific Coast is more alert and progressive than is this city and that determination to fully utilize all of its many advantages, and not sit down complacently and wait for its natural advantages to build up the town, has placed Grants Pass at the head of the Rogue River towns and will make it the big city of Southern Oregon.

Commercially Grants Pass has been making most rapid strides in the last five years and its volume of trade far exceeds that of any other town in the four and more story blocks will



NEWMAN M. E. CHURCH.

soon be gracing the business sections of Grants Pass. In its public buildings, Grants Pass has well kept pace with its business and residence growth, for its three school buildings, eight churches and town hall are a credit to the place.

In the public improvements and utilities the progressive spirit has dominated. Grants Pass has more miles of streets that are easily passable to vehicles at all seasons of the year than has any other town in Oregon south of Eugene, and their improvement is steadily being carried on. It is down as one of the things to be done in the near future that the macadam pavement of the main business streets is to be replaced with either asphalt or vitrified brick and it is quite probable that fully 12 blocks of Sixth street will be so improved next summer and

ity of goods carried and in the variety and complete selection the stores of Grants Pass are quite metropolitan and the days of the country are past in this city, but it is not a false pride and unwarranted rivalry that has brought this mercantile evolution to Grants Pass, but rather the demands of a large and growing trade that makes it possible for the local merchants to carry stocks such as are only found in cities. And the trade zone of Grants Pass has been steadily extending until it covers a territory beyond the limits of Josephine county and goods are sold for points 90 and 80 miles distant. With the building of the branch railroad to Crescent City, thus giving ocean freight competition, the commercial supremacy of Grants Pass will be still further extended and this is not an idle dream, but a reality that will be brought to pass within the next five years.



OPERA HOUSE BLOCK.

FIRST NATIONAL BANK.

HOTEL JOSEPHINE.

a few hundred yards of the home coral. The wild excitement of the earlier gold digging days had passed away and so the "rush" had gone to other fields. A few miners still labored with shovel and sluice in the gulches and in the creek beds the Chinamen were laboriously working over the ground abandoned by the whites. The horse, the fore runner of the hydraulic giant, began to come into use in some instances and outlines of bigger placer enterprises began to appear. A little surface quartz mining was being done with attractees.

Once each month, preaching was held in the little away-backed schoolhouse by a Methodist "circuit rider." The members of his flock were few but faithful and attended the services with strict regularity. These were quiet, peaceful, uneventful times and it was the popular supposition that the country had reached the

to the town sprang into existence. Abraham's addition, popularly known as "Jerusalem" was opened west of Gilbert creek. Stores and other business houses were opened and for a time it appeared as though the flow of trade would put "Jerusalem" in the lead. Considerable factional feeling between the two places existed at this time. But the addition was finally consolidated with the original townsite and the business houses of "Jerusalem" vanished one by one to be replaced later by residences. The original business block is the center of the business district of Grants Pass today.

The first newspaper, so small in size and erratic in its times of issue as to be scarcely worthy of the name, was the "Argos," published by Keeler H. Gabbert. It was a three column folio and what matter it contained was bright and interesting. A few issues only were published.



THIRD WARD SCHOOL.

HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING.