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'I Loves Her Most of All'



THE NEW BOARDMAN COUNTRY---A THRIVING OREGON THREE-YEAR-OLD

By A. W. Cobb, President of the Boardman Commercial Club.

When the traveler emerges from the gray desert of dreary sage brush, with the endless stretches of barren desolation unexpectedly and suddenly crosses the magic line which divides the "Desert from the Lawn" he is amazed, and sees in the instant transformation a revelation of the true meaning of irrigation.

As he proceeds along the former scene of arid desert, now changed to a prosperous farming community teeming with life and the evidences of civilization, with miles of living green alfalfa in the profusion of its luxuriant growth, he realizes as never before what we owe to the splendid achievements of the United States Reclamation Service, who by its intelligent efforts have thus wedded land and water and produced prosperity and happiness.

To the world at large and even to most of the rest of Morrow County, the North End was until recently practically unknown. This to some extent is still true owing to the intervening desert land, but this state of comparative isolation will soon be a memory only.

When this desert land is reclaimed, as it will be, Morrow County will come into its own. Its future growth and development must come from the reclamation of its arid land.

Lying in immediate continuity to the land reclaimed by the Government, viz., the west extension of the Umatilla Project, is the great body of land embraced in the proposed John Day Project, which is already formed into an irrigation district with good prospects of 300,000 acres.

It needs no great imagination to foresee the marvelous development which will occur once this land is open to settlement, or the mighty impetus which will result in making Morrow County the Yakima of Oregon, and the mecca of myriads of land hungry homeseekers.

The history of reclamation had its dark days. When reclamation of the land which now comprises the West Extension was under consideration a few years ago, many doubts were expressed as to the wisdom and feasibility of the undertaking.

It was feared that the soil was too sandy to grow crops, and that it would not retain water sufficiently, that it would blow away, and that the poor settler would starve out.

But the men of courage and vision and tenacity of purpose won out. Their labors were carried to a most successful conclusion, resulting in the reclamation of 15,000 acres along the Columbia river, now known as the West Extension of the Umatilla Project. The reclaimed area is a long strip of varying width with about 25 miles in length lying parallel with the river, railroad and Columbia river highway. The land slopes gently toward the river, with about the right amount of fall for irrigation and drainage. The soil is a fine sand, some silt, and also comprises some volcanic ash in its texture. It is a warm quick soil, very responsive to cultivation and easy to handle under all conditions. Water of good quality is found in abundance at depths of 15 to 20 feet.

Water is conveyed to this land from the Umatilla river, a dam of great length and height being constructed to conserve the water. From this point the water is conveyed 28 miles by the main canal and distributed by laterals to each 40 acre tract. The main canal, laterals and pipe lines are concrete lined and the construction work is considered to be the best of its kind. The system is controlled and operated by the officers of the Reclamation Service with headquarters in Hermiston and is judiciously and economically handled with just regards to the needs and rights of the water-users. Wa-

ter is plentiful and methods of distribution very satisfactory.

The Government also exercises a paternal regard for the settler, who is often a man of limited means and also of limited experience in irrigation matters, by providing for his assistance free of charge, the services of a farm expert to help him solve his agricultural problems. This expert from the Department of Agriculture is also an engineer and will lay out ditches, give land levels and instructions for headgates, tools, etc. To the novice in farm matters, this is a great help and somewhat removes the handicaps of inexperience.

The policy of the Government in limiting the homesteads to 40 acres has the merit of speeding up development, as the farmer more quickly puts his lands into crops than would be the case were he permitted to take 80 or 160 acres.

In regard to crops, this tract, owing to its low elevation, which is from 250 to 350 feet, is enabled to produce a much greater range of farm crops than higher levels. The long growing season and the warm character of the soil make it possible to produce early potatoes, peanuts, melons, cantaloupes, tomatoes, eggplant, asparagus, peaches, cherries, grapes and early strawberries and to get good prices from the early market. The low elevation also enables the farmers to get four cuttings of alfalfa, which is much to his profit and advantage.

The almost continual sunshine in summer is also an insurance of good quality, as rains seldom damage hay here, and it is easy to obtain the required green color peculiar to well cured alfalfa.

This crop is the mainstay of the project, and without it, farming would be a losing proposition. The nature of our soil renders this plant peculiarly necessary, as it supplies the humus-nitrogen and necessary plant food in which the land is somewhat deficient. Any crop will grow on land which has previously been planted in alfalfa.

Alfalfa is an ideal crop for this locality and is a profitable one to raise. It has few enemies here (rabbits excepted) does not winter-kill and the proximity of the stock country insures a good market. It also takes less labor to handle a hay crop than any others which in these times is a fact worth considering.

The land is usually put into alfalfa as soon as possible. It is generally started with a nurse crop of rye and if sown in spring will yield a fair crop about August or September, and three or four crops a year, thereafter. The average yield per acre is from 5 to 6 tons where the stand is matured. Larger yields have been reported in places. Mr. H. H. Weston raised this season, on a small area in section 19, at the rate of 9 tons, but this is exceptional. Much of the alfalfa acreage will do better with a little older stand, as the plant is exceedingly deep rooted when mature.

As prices for the past two or three years have been around \$20 per ton, alfalfa has been a fairly profitable crop to raise. There is no other forage crop that can begin to compare with alfalfa, and no crop so easily raised, so easily irrigated, harvested or marketed.

It is indispensable to the man who raises stock, and stock is always found where alfalfa grows. It is relished alike by all. Sheep, cattle, poultry and bees thrive on it, and where it is found, prosperity will not be lacking. The Boardman district has all the essentials of a great alfalfa producing section and no matter what other crops are later on produced, the main crop interest will center in this, the king of hay crops.

Corn does well here and as the dairying industry comes to the front,

will be extensively used for silage, and to make a balanced ration for stock.

Dairying and alfalfa go hand in hand, and has already obtained a good start here. A considerable number of pure-bred stock are kept on the project farms, preference being given to the Jersey cow.

The lands of this project are well located as to markets, being 160 miles from Portland on the west, while near by is the stock country and farther on the mining and timber districts, all of which are consumers of the produce raised here.

Traffic on the river is soon to be resumed and when boats are again in operation, it will have a tendency to reduce freight rates and give the shipper a choice of carriers and the benefit of water competition.

The entire tract is traversed by the Columbia river highway, one of the scenic marvels of the West. This splendid road is not excelled either in location or construction standards. The Boardman Road District No. 2, has voted to levy a 16 mill tax for a special fund and will use the money for betterment of roads through the project, and for the building of feeders to connect with the Columbia Highway.

It is agreed by all that better communication with the county seat and the rest of the county must be secured as soon as possible, by building a permanent road to Heppner. The mutual benefit to be derived from this would be worth many times its cost and would put an end to the present isolation, by bringing all parts of the county in closer contact. It is imperative that this road be built, and as public sentiment is in its favor, it is likely to materialize in the very near future.

Roads of the project are mostly in their natural state and not of the best, but are improving right along. Mail is carried over the project by a rural carrier.

The Boardman Mutual Telephone Company is also organized for business.

The West Extension is also recently created as an irrigation district in order to better secure the desired cooperation of the water-user and the Reclamation Service.

A Federal Farm Loan Association is also organized and ready to operate in this territory.

In regard to climate and weather here, the conditions are as most places and very healthy. We do not deny that the wind blows here sometimes, but we claim that it seldom reaches the storm standard.

The growing season is the longest in the Northwest and while the days are sometime warm, yet on the whole, the weather in summer is very comfortable and desirable. The winters are short and mild, with little snow. The roads are never muddy.

As the country becomes settled, a greater range of animal life is apparent, rabbits becoming a pest and a menace. Chinese pheasants are quite numerous, also other varieties of game birds are more common, as well as the smaller members of the feathered tribe. There are no poisonous reptiles, and rattlesnakes are never seen in the Boardman territory.

Viewing this land from the scenic standpoint, it may be said that the topography is pleasing, and that part of the project lying to the west particularly so. Nearly every farm has a fine view of the Columbia river, the land lying at sufficient height to afford a splendid panoramic view of a long stretch of that lovely stream. Mount Hood is seen in solitary grandeur far to the west, while across the river in Washington, are seen in the distance, the pine clad hills of Klickitat and the spurs of the Cascade Range.

As to the future of the land it is secure. Its destiny is in the hands of its builders, who are capable, intelligent and versatile, and in conjunction with their efforts it needs but the assisting hand of Time to bring the fruition of its full development, and when the project shows fair homes amid orchards and tall trees, set in the vivid green of broad expanses of alfalfa, this land will present a picture of rare pastoral charm and beauty; one of the beauty spots of the wide realm, "Where Rolls the Oregon."

FEAST FOLLOWS ARAB FAST

Institution of the East Much Resembles the Christian Observance of Lenten Season.

As the Mohammedan year is a lunar one, the months rotate through the different seasons, and the fast of Ramadan becomes a severe affliction upon the faithful when the month happens to fall in the hot days of summer. The sick, travelers and soldiers in time of war are temporarily released from this duty, as well as nursing women and others to whom it might prove injurious. The fast is followed by the feast of Bairam, which was established by Mohammed, who seems to have been guided by the Christian institution of Lent, which in the early church varied from four to six weeks. On this day every family of the true believers offers a sheep to God, and the streets of the cities are filled with men carrying the destined victims on their backs. Among the Arabs the festival begins at four in the morning, when great crowds collect at the residence of the nearest pasha or bey, awaiting his appearance in the court of the palace. At five o'clock his highness enters, accompanied by members of his family and his staff; cannon are fired, the peculiar bands of the East play suitable airs, and the chief captain announces that the hour of sacrifice has arrived, and that his highness, after prayer, will be present at this act. All then adjourn to the mosque, and when the sacrifice is over the pasha re-enters the court, and those of high rank kiss his hand; the inferior slightly touching it with their lips. This occupies about an hour, when all retire to take coffee, the captain thanking the crowd for their presence as a mark of attachment to their ruler.