

# PEAR BLIGHT AND ITS CONTROL UPON THE PACIFIC COAST

This is the Thirteenth of a Series of Articles That Will Be Printed Daily Until Subject is Completed—Every Orchardist in the West Should Save These Issues for Future Reference, as They Contain Valuable Information.

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## Eradication Work in California and Oregon.

In a preceding chapter, mention was made of the enormous losses in the pear districts of the San Joaquin valley, California. In the short space of three years, from 1900 to 1904, almost half a million pear trees were lost by blight. Practically no attempt was made to check the disease, and one of the greatest industries of the San Joaquin valley vanished like a dream, and even before the people realized what had befallen them. As in other localities, east and south, the growers had a self-sufficient and self-satisfied feeling that blight could never hurt them. They had grown pears for a quarter of a century and more, and such a thing as blight entering their valley was just as impossible as anything one might imagine.

In all that time, thunder, lightning, excessive heat, cold, etc., had caused not the slightest injury. However, as soon as blight came all the factors mentioned above seemed to explain their predicament fully, they needed no help and spurned assistance. This is the story, in a few words, a story which might be told of many other localities which had suffered the same calamity.

In 1904 the blight invaded the pear districts of the Sacramento valley, and although some little work was done in the matter of eradicating it, the efforts were weak and ineffective. Prominent men in the state became alarmed, and the pathologists of the United States department of agriculture were called to the coast. In the fall of 1904 Professor M. B. Waite made his first visit to California, and inaugurated a plan of campaign for eradicating it or at least keeping it under control. I may say that the government pathologists did not come to the Pacific coast until they were called. Such influential men as ex-Governor Pardee and prominent Southern Pacific officials appealed to Hon. James Wilson, secretary of agriculture, to send as many men as he had available, to aid in what was thought to be almost a hopeless case. Blight was everywhere with the exception of the Santa Clara valley, which to this day has kept it out by very careful and hard work. The task undertaken was an enormous one, and the amount of territory necessary to be covered was so large that every available source of help was called for and the campaign finally started in the early winter of 1905. The time was short, but good work was done. In many districts where there was a willingness to cooperate with the government officers the blight was checked, in others, where conditions were the reverse, the blight gained headway. The result of several years' work, which has been carried on up to the present time by the United States department of agriculture, is that several districts in the Sacramento valley and adjacent valleys have saved their pears. There are particular instances where practically everything went excepting single orchards which were saved by individual growers, by using heroic measures and carrying into effect every detail given them by the government officers. To this day these men continue to grow pears while their neighbors are entirely out of the business. They are charged with being lucky, but there is no luck in fighting pear blight; it is careful attention to details and constant watchfulness. Among those who have been successful in fighting pear blight is Howard Reed of Marysville, Cal. Mr. Reed, with 6000 Bartlett's, has lost relatively few, although the difficulties he had to overcome would have discouraged the average man. Three years ago his orchard was under water on account of the overflow from the Sacramento river and he was compelled to fight the pear blight from boats and rafts. To show you how well he has won out in the fight I will simply state that his crop two years ago was 50 carloads of first-class fruit, which he shipped to eastern markets. Besides his green fruit, he dried something over 25 tons. I cannot help pointing to Mr. Reed as an example for everyone to follow. He has made doubly good, because he had to fight not only the blight but the mossback community in which he lived.

In the foothill districts of Placer, Eldorado and Nevada counties east of Sacramento the loss has been ex-

ceedingly light. The growers in these sections began their fight early, and have kept it up so that at this time there are probably no fewer bearing pear trees than there were four or five years ago. In Placer county alone when I first began my work there, ten inspectors, including the county horticultural commissioners, were put on and the work of eradication was thoroughly done.

It would be very difficult to tell how many trees were lost in California throughout the entire state, but the figures taken from the carload shipments will tell the story pretty well. In 1900 California shipped 2115 carloads of pears, and in the same year 7275 tons were dried, and perhaps half a million cases were canned. In 1907, only 1039 cars were shipped and only 500 tons were dried. We have no data on the canned product, but it is well known that it fell off correspondingly. Such figures as I have given should strike terror into any community whose industry is that of growing pears and apples.

In the Rogue River valley and in southern Oregon we find a magnificent soil for pear and apple growing. At this time, with the valley only partially developed, the estimated value of the orchards reaches far into the millions. Pear blight has not been in the valley very long, but it is here and must be considered seriously. Only in three or four cases has it done any serious damage, and the total loss for the entire valley in pears and apples is probably not more than 2000 trees. The highest recorded loss in one orchard is perhaps 500 or 600 trees, and this loss might have been avoided if the owner had taken the proper steps in eradicating a very few cases of holdover blight. Another orchard lost nearly 200 trees, but these were mostly infected and practically destroyed before it was known that blight existed in the valley. The writer first came into the valley in 1907, and since that time a very strenuous fight has been kept up. As in California, we had to fight stupidity and ignorance, but, for the most part, the growers have swung into line and are putting up a good fight. Very slight losses have occurred during the past two years, and these losses have been mostly in the villages and towns and in the old home orchards, where it is difficult to make the owners see the necessity of cleaning up. The commercial orchards have done excellent work. Even the largest orchards in the valley have demonstrated the effectiveness of careful eradication. At this time it is a pleasure to visit them and see the heavily laden pear and apple trees with not a blighted spur or twig upon them.

The only serious mistake made in the beginning of the pear blight campaign in 1907 was the failure to provide a sufficient number of inspectors, and this mistake has only been remedied in part at this time. Until a year ago the entire work of going over the two counties of the Rogue River valley was given to two men. It is surprising that as good results have been gotten, and I have often wondered how it happened.

The importance of the pear blight problem to the horticultural interests of the Pacific coast states emphasizes very clearly the value and necessity of plant pathological work. What each district needs is a strong man who is both scientific and practical, for handling such a difficult problem. Not only does each district need the constant and careful attention of a trained pathologist, but it needs inspectors and commissioners who will see to it that the horticultural statutes are rigidly enforced. If a grower chooses to lose his crop by any disease which is not considered contagious or spreading, and which may readily be controlled by simple spray treatments, it is his own lookout; but where his pears and apples are a source of general infection from pear blight it becomes a matter for the district commissioner and local inspector. There is only one remedy and that is to increase the inspection and to make it rigid. Perhaps one other thing might be added. It would be a wise plan for each county or district to appoint a large number of volunteer inspectors who would serve without pay in their own interest, but who would be vested with authority to inspect and condemn within their immediate neighborhood. If this could have been done during the past year in the Rogue River valley many a dollar which has been spent in summer cutting would have been saved.

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# ROGUE IS MOST BEAUTIFUL LAND

E. E. Calvert of Portland Oregonian Writes of Hill Trip Through Valley and Says Railroad Magnate Praises It Highly.

E. E. Calvert, special correspondent of the Portland Oregonian, writes from Medford as follows of the Hill visit to the Rogue River valley in Monday's Oregonian:

This, the center of the Rogue River valley, can be reached by wagon road from Klamath Falls in a journey of about 85 miles, and a trip between the two points is one of the best lessons that can be obtained in the diversity of resources of Oregon.

In traveling over this 85 miles of wagon road one leaves at Klamath Falls the outskirts of a great stock range at the trading point of an irrigated section where hay, grain and root crops and dairying are profitable industries, enters and traverses the greatest existing belt of pine timber, crosses streams offering almost incomparable water power, and drops down into a valley whose fruit crops are famed the world over and which is surrounded by hills over and which is surrounded by hills where are some of the oldest still profitable placer diggings of the west.

Six Industries Represented. In this stretch of 85 miles, six great resources of Oregon are represented—stockraising, general agriculture, timber, horticulture, water power and mines. Practically the only two that are not found are Oregon's strictly grain-producing districts and its commercial fisheries.

The 65 miles of road between Klamath Falls and Ashland, which were traversed by the Hill party in gaining Western Oregon, constitutes one of the oldest highways in the state. Over this road, nearly 50 years ago, William Hanley, one of Mr. Hill's companions in the tour, first accompanied his father in a cattle drive from the Rogue River valley to Harney county. Mr. Hanley, in driving cattle, followed until 1882, this old road from Rogue river to Linkville, now known as Klamath Falls. Thereafter a shorter route, known as the Dead Indian road, was followed over the mountains by the cattlemen who purchased stock in Western Oregon and drove them to the rich ranges of Harney county, there to fatten them for the market.

The journey Thursday, the first he had made over the road in 27 years, brought out many reminiscences from the big cattleman of Central Oregon. Mr. Hanley pointed out where the cattle had mired down on one drive, another point where the "chuck wagon" and the calves had to be halted for several days on account of muddy roads, and related how in the interval the cows forgot their offspring and had to be lassoed later, that the hungry youngsters might be fed. Homes of pioneers, now dead and gone, were identified and the peculiarities of the men of the early days were related.

Road Almost Impassable. Forty miles of this old road, although full of scenic attractions, are now almost impassable, because of ruts and rocks. After reaching Ashland Mr. Hanley, in addressing the business men at luncheon, urged the improvement of this road for the benefit of Southern Oregon, asserting that it was a better highway 40 years ago than it is today.

In spite of its familiarity to the old-timers of Southern Oregon, the Klamath country is looked upon as a new district by the commercial interests of Portland, and in a way it is a new country, for railroad transportation and irrigation are bringing about a new growth and development. Yet, 25 years ago, wheat sent from Klamath county to an exposition in New Orleans gained a first prize. In the valley below the city are farms that would be a pride in any agricultural territory of the middle states or far east.

The N. C. Merrill place, where the Hill party was entertained at lunch Tuesday, was declared by Mr. Hill to be the best farm he ever saw. The home is a handsome residence of the Colonial type, with spacious verandas and surrounded by a well-kept lawn. Electric current tapped from transmission lines extending from Klamath Falls throughout the valley lights the house and barns, operates motors that move farm machinery and pump water for the household supply. The livestock is thoroughbred and the fields are marvels of scientific cultivation. Mr. Merrill's neighbors often call on him to direct their seeding, and he has the reputation of being able to secure a better stand of alfalfa than any man in the country.

Farmers Are Enterprising. Other farmers of the Klamath country are endeavoring to bring

their lands to the same high type of cultivation and improvement, and when the better rail facilities now under construction are completed, nothing will apparently stand in the way of making the Klamath country a model in agricultural endeavor.

The transition from this level, cultivated area to the pine timber belt with its rushing streams is remarkable, but less so than the change from the timber belt to the orchards of Rogue river. A transformation has taken place since William Hanley drove cattle over the Siskiyou trails to interior Oregon. Now the Rogue valley no longer supplies cattle for the ranges and the livestock market. Once this was a hay-producing country. Now Rogue River valley is buying beef cattle for its own market and is shipping in hay for livestock consumption.

The channel of trade is still in the process of reversing, for the valley promises to become a larger buyer year by year. The old cattle trails are being replaced by the railroad the Hill interests are building from Medford to a connection with the Oregon Trunk line. This road will tap the timber belt, carry the fruit of Rogue River valley to Central Oregon and eastern markets and bring back beef cattle to the consumers of the valley and hay and grain to feed the fancy livestock and the farm animals that are needed in the cultivation of the lands.

Orchards Replace Meadows. Alfalfa is still grown in the Rogue River valley, but the meadows are being rapidly replaced by pear and apple orchards. Last year 15,000 acres were set out to orchards in the portion of the Rogue River valley extending from Ashland south to where the valley pinches 12 miles below Medford before again widening out into the Grants Pass district.

In this 25 miles length of valley there are now 65,000 acres set in orchards, and from this area the fame of Rogue river fruit has been given by only 2500 acres of bearing trees. Next year will probably see more than 15,000 acres additional converted into orchard lands. In the season of 1909 this portion of the Rogue River valley shipped 500 carloads of fruit, valued at \$1000 a car. It is estimated that this year 1000 carloads will be shipped, next year 2000 carloads, and the following year 3000 carloads.

In the new orchards pears are coming more and more into favor, for as a producer of fancy pears Rogue river prides itself that it never can be beat. In apple-growing it has

strong competitors in the Hood River, Wenatchee and other countries. Up to this year the percentage of new orchards set to pear trees was about 50. This year it is about 65 per cent.

Whole Region Like Picture. Of the Rogue River valley, more truthfully than of any other district in the west, it can be said "it is like the pictures in the book." Handsomely illustrated literature can be issued descriptive of almost any prosperous country by using for the illustrations only the show places. In Rogue River valley one may turn the camera in any direction and the result is a gem.

The Hill party has made a close study of the valley from Ashland for 25 miles north. Automobiles have taken them from Ashland, through Talent and Phoenix to Medford, thence under the guidance of Medford folk to Jacksonville, the county seat of Jackson county, and the second oldest town in the state, by placer diggings that have produced \$22,000,000 in gold and are still being worked, thence through the Sams valley, a tributary of the Rogue, and on to Central Point and then out over the Pacific & Eastern railroad route to five miles beyond Eagle Point and

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# The Pasadena of Oregon

People of refinement; people with means; retired business men; professional men; college and university graduates, are coming to the Rogue River Valley by the score. Within the past two years almost a hundred Chicago and Evanston, Illinois, people have purchased homes near Medford, and nearly every one of them has a friend or two whom they hope to induce to come and locate in the valley.

New York, Philadelphia, Boston and many other eastern cities are almost if not quite as well represented, while St. Paul and Minneapolis have more representatives here than any other several cities combined.

Think these statements over and get your thinker going. Write to the undersigned or the Medford Commercial Club for detailed information about the country, and you will never have cause to regret it.

## Bearing Orchards Near Medford

Most of the producing orchards have been held in large holdings until recently. A few weeks ago the Eden Valley Orchard, containing 605 acres, was placed on the market in any desired acreage. We have been authorized to offer the bearing apples and pears for sale, and if you know anything about the country and want a desirable block of bearing trees, write or come soon. During the past week over \$150,000 worth of the property has been disposed of. It is located within two miles of Medford at an elevation of about 100 feet above the city and is one of the best kept orchards in the world. Parts of the orchard offered for sale have paid the owner over \$600 per acre per year for four years straight.

Do not come unless you are prepared to stay, for just so sure as you do come the combination of fat soil, grandeur of scenic beauty and Italian climate will steal you, body and soul. After one visit here you will be miserable any other place on earth.

# John D. Olwell

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