

Story of the Largest Commercial Orchard in Oregon

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diet that this roadway, beginning with "Cherry Lane," and circling around the knolls through the whole extent of the orchard, is destined to become one of the favorite summer sightseeing runs for motorists and visiting friends. The road itself is kept in perfect trim throughout the dry season. "Black sticky" reputation, however, as a winter road material, is too well established to need any comment on its condition during the wet months of the year.

System of Planting

As we rode along, the manager explained his system of planting, based on Cherry Lane, and running back on either side. First, the two rows of Royal Anne; then two rows

of peaches, carefully assorted to cover the entire range of bearing, from earliest to latest; next a row of plums; followed by a solid planting of the Rogue river valley's premier commercial fruits, twenty rows of apples and fifteen rows of pears, with one row of Italian prunes to mark the further boundary of the tract. Over the knolls and rounded "ridges" and down through the sunny "draws," the long straight rows march into the distance, from one boundary fence to the other, east and west. A glance at the planting plat shows how easy it will be to cut the orchard, straight across the rows, into five and ten acre or larger subdivisions, giving to each the same plantings, and a desired variety of fruits, a "family orchard" and a commercial plant.

Beautiful Building Sites Reserved

From the homebuilder's point of view, there seems nothing left to be desired in the building sites which the management has carefully reserved in the most advantageous locations. Scenic values have entered into the calculation equally with comfort and convenience, and the most economical use of the ground. To this end, there have been set aside the areas which would not yield the highest results in horticulture, the tops of many of the knolls, the upper ends of the various "draws," and other parklike spots in the natural wooded state, to be platted into one, two and three acre building lots, one such lot to be sold with every subdivision of the orchard proper. Following such a plan, no part of the good fruit land need be sacrificed to unproductive uses, nor any money or effort spent, with ill success or half-success, in coaxing trees to grow on barren ground. Ten acres of orchard means ten acres of good orchard in these tracts. Access to the orchard tracts from the building sites will be secured by proper dedicated lanes, and there is an abundance of good roadmaking material in the neighborhood for surfacing the roads when such an improvement shall be called for.

Naturally Drained

There is perfect natural drainage through the whole tract, no necessity for tiling having shown itself in the experience of the present owners.

This assures the easy development of practical sanitation for the future community of homebuilders that will some day occupy their comfortable habitations here, enjoying every modern convenience. Telephone service is already provided over the whole orchard, over a line from Medford built jointly with the Hillcrest orchard. Electric current will be available at any time, for all purposes; and pure soft running water can be had in great abundance, from the living spring with which the tract is plentifully supplied. The elevation of these springs is such that water under pressure can be piped into any residence that will ever be built on the building sites, saving all expense of engines, gasoline, etc. All of the houses now built, and occupied by the workmen's families, are supplied with running water from this source, and the barns and stock sheds as well. There is not a well in use on the entire tract. There are two big springs, as yet untapped, near together, at the highest elevation on the tract, near the north line, so situated that their waters can be impounded in a reservoir, which would assure an un-failing supply throughout the year.

Wonderful View

Last to be mentioned, but by no means the least of the attractions held out to home-seekers, is the view afforded from any part of the tracts, unrivalled in its charm and wideness

of scope. Dwellers on the floor of the valley cannot realize the grandeur of our mountain scenery, until they have climbed the heights, and measured with the eye the great sweep of the Siskiyou as it appears from some favorite vantage point in the Westland tracts. The view from there is impossible to be conveyed in words. It is one long

draught of beauty, one long continued refreshment of eye and soul. Looking down from there on a clear summer day, under unclouded skies, it requires no effort of the mind to fall in with Joaquin Miller's comparison of the Rogue river valley with a more widely known but no more beautiful scenery: "It is the Italy of America."

Planted Along Lines of Proven Success

The writer stood at last beside Mr. Westerlund on one of the high knolls in the Monitor tract, north of the ranch headquarters, and gazed around upon the scene of so much activity, enterprise and faith. It was, indeed, a goodly sight that greeted the eyes of the observer, one looking with the natural curiosity and delight of a spectator, the other with that feeling of content which comes after the labor of years, when a man looks upon the work of his hands, and knows that it is good.

Experience Worth While

"One of the most valuable of all acquisitions," said Mr. Westerlund, "is the knowledge which comes through experience. We here in this valley know far more about this business than it was possible for men to know seven or ten years back. Speaking broadly, I believe the fact that so many still remain of all those who then planted their stakes here, in a practically then untried venture, and set out the thousands of acres of young orchards in the highest hope, the hope of a goodly reward of their labors and security for the cares of age—I think that fact demonstrates on broad lines that the main claims and the substantial promises of the orchard business, put forth at that time and since, were not wild guesses, nor mere extravagant 'boom talk,' doomed to bitter fulfillment. The men who, like myself, were attracted here then, on a substantial business basis, are, for the most part, here today, and they are in the fruit-growing business. Anyone of them could have sold out a good profit and gone away any number of times in the past ten years; and if the orchard business were what the knockers say it is, a disappointment and a losing venture, these men, who have been actually engaged in it, would have found that fact out sooner than anyone else, and they would have quit

at the first chance. The people who have reason to complain of disappointment here are not the industrious, thrifty men who are content to stay with a proposition of this kind, and build up a business by hard work, steady and patient, but they are the get-rich-quick element, the land speculators and professional boomers, whom this community can very well do without. I will admit that this element of our population has suffered disappointment, but I will not say that I am sorry for them, for I am not. Nor is any other investor who has discounted the 'boom talk' of the 'Eldorado bunch,' bought his acres, built for himself and family a permanent home, and then taken off his coat and gone to work with his own head and hands, to help make the vision of the business prophets of a few years back into a substantial reality. I take off my hat to this element; they are the salt of this community. As for the others, with whom, as with most of my fellow-men, I am glad to say, I have had only the most pleasant personal relations, I am always willing to be one of the crowd at the Southern Pacific depot, to give them a good handgrip and Godspeed, whenever they pull up stakes and leave for other fields, more fit for their particular vocations.

Refused to Sell

"Coming back to my own personal affairs, and to this orchard enterprise," he continued, "the experience of these past years has also brought with it only confirmation of the value of the plans which we then formulated for this promotion, and the ideas back of those plans. I am glad to feel that those ideas have been justified by what we have gone through, and what others have gone through. Ours has not been an easy performance, and we have not been following a blazed trail through all

the hardships of this enterprise; but we have come out in the main where we expected to come out, with this orchard well made, without debts and without danger of loss. There have been tempting offers made at times to sell out and turn the whole thing over to other parties; and we could have made a good profit out of any one of these offers, and have left our investors in good hands, or have paid them all out to their profit, and with their consent and good will. But we went into this thing for the long pull, and for a certain accomplishment, as well as for pecuniary profit, and we have not been disappointed. When I first came out here, nearly ten years ago, and became convinced of the merits of this orchard proposition, I saw also that it was a business which would require an investment of time, money and patience which the ordinary investor in the Eastern states would not have at his command; and that, moreover, it was a special business, in which such people, in most cases, were not fitted to engage personally. I saw, too, and I have since only held more firmly to this belief, that such a person could not come out here, talk five, ten or fifteen acres, plant it, cultivate it, and bring it into successful bearing, over a stretch of years, without the gravest danger of losing out somewhere along the line, through sheer inability to meet the growing demands of the as yet unproductive trees with the necessarily diminishing returns from by-products. But, I reasoned with myself, if we can plant a large tract, with the promise of sufficient funds, to be regularly and faithfully supplied from year to year as the trees are growing, and carry this operation on as a whole, with consequent large saving of cost over small operations, when the trees themselves shall be old enough so that a man can look to them for his livelihood, and that of his family, then will be the time to subdivide such a tract, and sell it off in five, ten and twenty acre parcels, to men who are looking for a home, and for occupation as well, and who are prepared to pay a proper price for the opportunity which we shall have prepared for them. So we have steadily refused to sell any part of this tract heretofore to prospective buyers, even to those who would guarantee to live on their purchases and continue the improvements begun,

and even though such offers have ranged as high as eight hundred dollars per acre for certain pieces. We did not want to have any skeletons lying around under our trees, or some half-starved knockers scattered here and there around our acres. Nor did we ever want a prosperous buyer here and there, whom we would have to plow around. We wanted to keep the whole under one management, in one comprehensive scheme, until the time should be ripe to throw the gates open, and say to the world: 'Here is a developed orchard, self-supporting, and ready to yield a livelihood and more to any man who will come in, buy, build his home, bring in his family, and then peel his coat, and just go ahead with the work as it is turned over to him.' That time is now nearly arrived, and it is our purpose to have these orchards platted into small tracts at no distant date, and to place them on the market at a price that our investment and care will surely justify, and that will yield a profit to the Eastern investors whose long-continued faith in this enterprise is not by any means the least return which I have personally had for my share

of the efforts of the past years. Ten years is a big slice out of any man's life; many things come and go in that time. These acres are now nearly ready for sale to home-builders; that has been the purpose of years; but I cannot part with the friendships won along the way, of those who have furnished the sinews of war for carrying on the battle, in addition to my own means, and whose personal and written expressions of satisfaction with the work performed, I shall continue to treasure when I am no longer responsible to them for the safety and profit of their investments."

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