

Klamath County Development News Columns

Old King Spud Is Becoming One of Klamath County's Most Persistent Boosters; Potato Crop Increases

A new domain has been discovered for old King Spud! Klamath, the county with more undeveloped resources than any other in the state of Oregon, and probably in the west, has proved its superiority as a possible production center for America's leading staple, quality potatoes, and lots of them, bringing excellent returns at ordinary prices, has been the record of all farmers in this county who have ventured potato acreages, and their success has been sufficiently great that potato planting remains no longer a venture. The history of the spud in Klamath county reads like a hi-power Florida realty folder. Here it is, in brief:

History Interesting
Only a few years ago Klamath farmers harbored a supposedly firm conviction that potatoes could only be grown in certain sheltered sections in the county, principally on sloping and well protected dry-land ranches. The advent of irrigation projects failed to weaken these anti-convictions, until a few farmers, blessed with vision, ventured to plant small tracts on irrigated land. Their yields were successful and the consequent returns satisfactory, but it was not until four or five years ago that people generally became aware of the fact that the Klamath country is particularly adapted to the growing of this most necessary crop.

Quality Was Unknown
In those earlier days, the surpassing quality of the Klamath potato was unknown outside of this district, and heavy increases in planted acreage often resulted in an over-burdened local market whose quite ordinary prices were a discouraging factor in the development of the industry. But in the course of recent years, the excellent flavor and texture of spuds grown on this thrice-blessed high plateau, has been noised abroad, and under the impetus of customer-demand, merchants on the coast are asking for Klamath potatoes. This wide demand has naturally been an incentive to increased acreage.

Wonderful Acreage Increase
In 1923 the acreage cropped to potatoes was less than 1,000, and a very few cars were shipped to outside points. The entire production brought good prices, however, and the following year the acreage jumped almost 50 per cent, there being 1400 acres planted in 1924. In spite of extremely adverse conditions that year, the yield was satisfactory and the quality better than ever before, with the result that local markets were fully supplied and about 20 carloads of the crop shipped to outside markets.

Heavy Planting Followed
The year 1925 witnessed the heaviest plant in the history of the county, when 2,000 acres of fertile Klamath soil were devoted to potatoes by enthusiastic farmers, secure in the knowledge that a true feature crop had been found for their land. Yields last year averaged around 100 sacks to the acre, except on farms where potatoes were made the major industry. In the latter cases, average yields were considerably higher. The total value of the crop for 1925 reached approximately \$225,000, and for many weeks following the rich harvest, freight cars and trucks carried Klamath spuds to eager markets throughout southern Oregon and northern California. It is estimated that nearly 150 carloads left the country, besides the quantities consumed here.

Acreage Is Broadened
This year potato acreage has again widened materially, and all indications are for a record crop. With the annual addition of several thousand acres of irrigated land, and the fame of the Klamath potato spreading rapidly, C. A. Henderson, county agricultural agent,

has predicted that in a very few years this county is destined to become the heaviest producer of high quality potatoes on the entire Pacific coast.

"Within the next three or four years, the potato acreage should be, and no doubt will be, increased to 10,000 or 15,000 acres," Henderson declared, and he, being in constant touch with the farmers of the county, is perhaps best-fitted to judge. "With proper transportation facilities coming to this southern Oregon basin when the Southern Pacific opens the Cascade line this fall, my estimate of 15,000 acres might easily be doubled," he stated.

Industry Is Expanding
With only a few thousand acres planted now, and the prospects of a probable 30,000-acre plant within the next few years, existing opportunities in this field are readily seen to be unlimited. Present prices of excellent land in Klamath county will prevent no one from entering this phase of agriculture, and the time when regal spud is entitled to a corner of the Klamath coat-of-arms, may not be so far away.

Conditions for growing this crop are exceptionally favorable throughout the irrigated lands, and good yields are assured from year to year. Occasionally a spring frost retards the crop and cuts down the yield somewhat, but this damage in the past has been negligible and is given little consideration by the potato growers. Soils in this region are particularly free from potato diseases, due largely to the high altitude. Soil varies from a light to heavy sandy loam, ideal for the production of a smooth, bright, high quality potato of a favored marketable size.

Netted Gems, the favorite variety

in this county, and one which brings a higher price than any other potato grown on irrigated land, last year returned to growers a gross up to \$200 per acre. This figure is of course, above average, but nevertheless serves to show the possibilities of this favored commercial potato. Bliss Triumph, Gold Coin and Irish Cobbler varieties are grown to some extent here for the local early-summer market.

Potatoes from this district exhibited at the Klamath county fair last fall, were declared by experienced and wide-traveled judges to be the best they had seen in the state of Oregon. Potato exhibits from Klamath to the state fair last year won blue ribbons in the senior open and junior classes.

Henley Leads District
Henley is at present the leading potato district of the county, and according to Frank Mayfield, who raises 15 or 20 acres of the crop each year, prospects this year are for an excellent yield at good prices. Incidentally Mayfield hauled a number of truck loads of spuds to Medford last fall and received from 15 to 20 cents more a sack for them than dealers were paying for Willamette valley potatoes.

Mayfield cleared in the neighborhood of \$2500 on 15 acres of potatoes in the Henley district last year, and so enthusiastic was he over the showing, that he planted 25 acres last spring. A good many farmers in that locality have 30 and 40-acre tracts devoted to spuds this season, he stated. Among the leading growers who have made outstanding successes in potato raising, are C. A. Hill, Ira Orem, Sam Dillinger, Henry Semon and the Haley brothers. None of these far-

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Building Boom Is Continuing With Great Activity

Army of Skilled Mechanics Finds Employment; Street Paving Program is Being Rushed

The building boom, if such it may be termed, continues in Klamath Falls unabated. By reason of the rapidly expanding population provision must be made for home-seekers, and naturally more business structures follow.

Klamath Falls is homing great numbers of unmarried men, and this calls for additional hotel accommodations. As a natural consequence, hotels and rooming houses are in course of construction, and others are planned, all of which spells prosperity for the city and county.

No Boom in Evidence
While no boom is in the making, there is a steady growth of the city in evidence. The vast amount of building that is in order calls for large numbers of mechanics in the various trades, and in a great majority of cases these men will ultimately decide upon establishing

themselves permanently in the clorado of the great northwest.

Construction is being rushed on the Willard and Anchor hotels, the former to cost \$150,000 and the latter \$100,000, both to be thoroughly modern in every respect.

Another New Hotel

During the week announcement was made that it would only be a short while until ground will be broken on the proposed \$200,000 hotel to be erected at the corner of Pine and Seventh streets. Portland men are back of this proposition, and it is stated that the furnishings alone will cost \$75,000, and that

the order for the equipment has already been placed.

Awarding of the contract for the public library building will give employment to quite a number of tradesmen. This structure will cost \$41,000, and will provide a recreation and educational place for a multitude of people who may be classed as bookworms.

Office Building Planned

Of interest to professional men of this city was the announcement during the week that work will begin soon upon a new office building, centrally located, which is to be financed by the General Mortgage

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