

KLAMATH REPUBLICAN

W. O. SMITH, Editor and Proprietor.

LEADING NEWSPAPER OF INTERIOR OREGON.
TWO DOLLARS THE YEAR IN ADVANCE.

Klamath Falls, Ore., Thursday, August 17 1905.

MESSAGE FROM THE WEST

J. B. Mason Writes Entertainingly of Klamath County.

(The Eureka, Kas., Herald.)

Klamath Falls, Ore., July 3, 1905.
Dear Editor—Having promised several of my Greenwood County friends, that I would write them a description of this part of the country, and finding that a description which would give anything like an intelligent idea of what is to be found here, would require such lengthy letters, I have concluded to ask The Herald to publish a letter which they all and many more may see. I have waited in order to get better acquainted with the country and conditions here, before writing, and still hesitate, as I never like to pass on a case until the evidence is all in.

Realizing in this case however, that the evidence will continue, and indeed not cease to accumulate, I will therefore now try to tell as nearly as I can what this section of country has to offer the immigrant, as I see it on this short acquaintance.
It is possible that I may make some mistakes, but I do not mean to, and if anyone shall come from there here and will bring the paper containing this letter with him, I think he will find it to be substantially correct. So far at least as the statement of facts is concerned. Klamath County is 72 miles wide from east to west in the central and southern part, by one hundred miles north and south through the central part.

It is more than four times the size of the state of Rhode Island. It contains within its borders a marvelous variety of mountains and valleys, of lakes and streams, of hot springs and springs that are ice cold, of sage brush plains and tule marshes, of pine forests abounding in wild game, and lakes and streams teeming with fish.
In the north west part of the county is Crater Lake National Park. Crater Lake is one of the wonders of the world. The lake is said to be about ten miles across and the water about 600 feet deep, the rim from 1000 to 2000 feet above the water, and 9400 feet above the sea. Klamath Falls, the county seat, is situated in the south west part of the county about one and a half miles below the lower end of Upper Klamath Lake, on Link River and the beautiful little Lake Ewauna. Link River flows from Upper Klamath lake into this lake, while the outlet of this lake is Klamath river.

The town has a population of about 1200 and it has a beautiful location, nestling as it does in a cove of the foot hills, which are "rock ribbed and ancient as the sun," while in the distance are to be seen mountains, some of which are snow capped, the most prominent Mount Shasta about one hundred miles to the south of us, in California, towering aloft in his white mantle 14400 feet high and reminding one of ghostly sentinel keeping guard over all around him.

Then there is the lake and the valley in front. Across the valley to east about twelve miles distant, we can see Lost river gap, where Lost river flows through between the mountains on nearly the same level as this valley. This is the gap where Captain Jack in time of the Modoc War, after having crossed the valleys above, brought his warriors through and, skirting around the foot of Stukel mountain skurried away down the valley to the lava beds, where there are great caves with springs in them and where these Indians had cached food, and were able to hold out indefinitely.

To the southeast the valley is a comparatively level plain across which we can see for about twenty-five miles. On either side are hills and mountains rising abruptly from the plains, and back of which open out from this, other valleys as beautiful and fertile as this one and all combining in a scene which for beauty and picturesqueness is really charming. But for Klamath river these valleys would be a lake. Upper Klamath lake is some twenty-five miles long and two to twelve miles wide. Lower Klamath lake is about 12 miles south of Klamath Falls and is part in Oregon and part in California and some 15 or 20 miles long. There is a steamboat on the upper lake large enough to carry 200 passengers or more and there is another now being built here for the lower lake and the river between.

The lands in these valleys are of two classes, viz., sage brush lands and tule marshes. The soil of the sage brush lands is a sandy loam, varying from a darker heavier soil with not much sand to a soil lighter in color and more sandy. Some places being quite sandy. It works as fine as one could wish.

Prof. W. S. Slough, who was formerly Supt. of public schools of Greenwood County, Kansas, and myself have engaged in the real estate business together and as I had much to learn about these lands we got a two inch auger and had a shank put on it four feet long and I take it with me when I go to show land to anyone and we bore down into the soil. Usually there is very little change in the soil so far down as that will reach, it is simply growing lighter in color as we go down. A small per cent of this land is now being farmed and has proven itself to be exceedingly productive in favorable seasons, and I have been told of wheat making 15 bushels per acre with no rain after it was started in the spring. Grain here is almost all spring sowing except rye. I know a farm 4 miles from town on which I am told the wheat last year made 35 bushels to the acre

and oats 90, without irrigation and the crop now on the same land looks well. I have seen rye which I am told is volunteer and the sixth crop since sowing. I have also seen volunteer wheat which promises a fair light crop and with more rain it would have been good. Also volunteer potatoes which promise a fairly good crop. I am told that potatoes on the slopes of the hills and mountains next to the valley without irrigation, yield well, but not heavily, and that very little cultivation is required. This much I know, that there are plenty of last year's potatoes here now, and the quality I have never seen excelled. I am informed that the yield can be largely increased by irrigation, but unless it be judiciously done, it will be at the expense of the quality.

The cereals grown are wheat, oats, barley and rye. I have been told of some very large yields of these grains under irrigation. The truth of which I have no reason to doubt, the largest being 63 bushels of wheat to the acre. Corn is not grown at all except the sweet corn, which seems to do well. In dry farming, i. e., without irrigation, stockmen grow a great deal of rye for hay, as it is easily produced, growing a volunteer crop year after year. Alfalfa appears to be very fine on irrigated lands producing in two to three cuttings from four to six tons per acre according to best reports obtainable, and the feeding quality is of a very high order. Timothy is also excellent in these valleys, producing, it is said, two to four tons to the acre.

Blue grass and white clover have only been grown on lawns and in small patches where they got started apparently by accident, but where irrigated I have seen the tallest and I think the heaviest growth of both especially the white clover, that I ever saw anywhere. I showed this blue grass and white clover, to three strangers from California and Colorado. Men who understand irrigation, and I asked them if this land seemed like that would not support one good dairy cow to the acre, during the pasture season. They said "It will support more than two." Cows seem to do exceedingly well here on the native grass, and the milk and butter is fine. All stock seem to do well. Horses in a general way seem livelier than they do elsewhere that I have been. It is claimed by some that they can stand more work. If this is true it is doubtless due both to climatic conditions and feed. They have the finest and cleanest threshed oats that I ever saw. Stock is said to do well on the range seven to nine months in the year. Poultry does very well indeed.

Now let no reader conclude from the foregoing that the writer means to convey the idea that here is to be found a place of perfection, or even approaching it. The more I see of this world, the more I am impressed with its beauties and wonders, and the ample provision made in it by "the Giver of every good and perfect gift," for the sustenance and development of man, but he who expects to find perfection in country or people, this side of the millennium, is doomed to disappointment.

The worst drawbacks which I have been able to find here so far aside from droughts, which are to be overcome by Government irrigation, are late springs and liability to frost. The late spring of course shortens the growing season, but I am told the autumn is fine. The frost seems to vary with different localities, and one time it will affect one place and at another time another place. Some people say that it is useless to try to raise garden stuff on account of frost, while others say they are mistaken. While these do not deny but that sometimes some things are injured, they say that industry and perseverance in this direction, is usually well rewarded. One thing I have noticed wherever I have been, and that is, people who do not plant things are not apt to grow them. There are a few gardens here and there and in some of them, the growth of vegetables would, I think, satisfy the most exacting. They are simply immense. While there have been cases in which there was material damage done by frost, I have asked several old resident farmers, if they have ever known in the fifteen or twenty years in which they have lived here, anything like a failure from frost, and they have each said they have not. I have seen no effect of the frost on grain so far in this immediate vicinity, but some fifteen or twenty miles from here I saw three or four fields of rye about the 28th of May in which there were perhaps ten per cent of the heads turned white by having been frosted.

We arrived here on the 18th of May and after that time saw frost which seemed to me must kill all garden stuff and fruit, and I believe it would have done so in some other places, but here, so far as I have seen, fruit only was damaged. The people here say that the fruit crop is short, much shorter than last year, but notwithstanding this, I have seen several apple and cherry trees which were very full and a few peaches and other fruits. The raspberries, blackberries, gooseberries and red currants nearly all I have seen are very full.

The people are by the fruit like they are by the garden, many have been afraid to plant trees on account of frost and also lack of rainfall. Now many of them wish they had planted years ago. As I write, there are apples on my desk, grown last year by Mr. Slough, on the only tree he had, which is about eight inches in diameter and from which he gathered ten bushels. Four bushels of these he wrapped in paper and put in the cellar and says he has found only one decayed apple among them. I do not know what variety they are. They

look somewhat like the maiden's blush, being about the same size but having more of the blue. For appearance, coloring and quality, they are very hard to beat. The same tree has apples on now, but not nearly so many as last year. This is the 8th day of July and these look like they might be kept until those on the tree shall become ripe. I have heard of the soundness of the apples here, and their freedom from worms remarked upon and I speak of these at length in order to show that in this case at least there is truth in it. It seems to be confidently expected here, that when the valley shall have been all irrigated, the danger from frost will be materially decreased.

Some of the sage brush land can be plowed without doing anything to it. The larger sage brush will cost from \$2.00 to \$5.00 per acre to hire it cleared. There are machines here to which 4, 6, or 8 horses are hitched and it takes a swath 6 or 8 feet wide. Then the brush is raked with a revolving rake and then burned. The land can be put in perfect order the first plowing. Irrigation was begun here some twenty years ago, and what it will do on these sage brush lands is well known to these people. There is only a small per cent of these lands in cultivation however.

The tule marsh lands are low level lands along the river and lakes in places, which are covered a part of the time, and some of them all the time, with water from a few inches to a few feet deep, and have grown up in tules—giantic brush. These immense crops of vegetation decaying and mixing with the silt which is being continually carried in from the mountains by the water, together with the myriads of water fowl, which have for ages at certain times in the year literally swarmed in these marshes, combine, it would seem to make these lands as rich as soil can get.

The tests of the government soil expert show the marsh soil to be eight feet in depth in many places and nowhere it is shallow. It is believed that these lands will excel in the production of timothy hay, red clover, oats, cabbage, celery, asparagus and root crops including sugar beets.

The roads are quite dusty and I am told that in the winter and early spring they get very muddy. There are no mosquitoes here, but no chiggers nor chinch bugs. There are but few flies as yet, but I am told they will be quite plentiful later in the season.
As to climate, the people here claim it is not subject to sudden changes, and thus far, I have found that to be the case. The summer weather is delightful. Just now we are having some hot days, but it is pleasant in the shade and the nights are cool. It is said that the snow fall is somewhat larger here than in Kansas and for the last two winters the mercury has not fallen below zero, and to that point on two or three mornings only, but it has been known to be as low as eighteen below. I have seen no hard storms here and it is claimed there are none, and very little thunder and lightning. The country is claimed to be and seems to be quite healthful. The doctors say that children are very free from summer complaints. It would seem that the marshes would produce malaria, but there seems to be scarcely any of it. The absence of it I thought to be due to the elevation, which is 4086 feet. An abundance of good soft water is very easily obtained, many wells being only from 10 to 20 feet in depth and no rock. The Government has decided to put in a system of irrigation in these valleys, locally known as Klamath Basin, embracing about 250,000 acres at a cost of \$4,400,000.00. The project embraces also the drainage of the marsh lands and the irrigation of them. The whole cost is estimated to be \$18.60 per acre payable in annual payments without interest. This will amount to less per acre, per year than is paid by farmers in many localities to irrigation companies as water rent; whereas in this case at the end of the ten years, when all have paid up, the farmers will own the system. The Government builds it in the best and most substantial manner and the farmers have to pay back only what it cost, without interest. These waters being interstate waters, the Government has appropriated the use of these streams, and the immense water power in them becomes a part of this enterprise, so that the owners of the land under this irrigation system, will also own the water power. The fall of Link river from the Upper lake to this town, 14 miles is 65 feet, and the fall in Klamath river from where it leaves the valley, is 1800 feet in twelve miles to say nothing of the rapids in other streams.

As a matter of fact, the amount of electrical energy which may be developed from this water power and the possibilities as to what may be done with it are so vast that one fails to appreciate them. And this is all secured by the Government to the owners of land under this system of irrigation. No one person can get a water right for more than 160 acres, as the intention of the Government in this irrigation law, is to prepare land for homes and not for speculation. Therefore men who have large tracts of land may deed 160 acres to their wives, and 160 acres to each child, but they must agree to sell the balance before the government will proceed with the work of construction. At least 95 per cent of the land under the project must be subject to such an agreement. Improved irrigated land is held at from \$50 to \$80 per acre. Unimproved sage brush land, irrigable by government project is selling at from \$12 to \$20 per acre according to quality and location. These can be put in first class condition for crops at once. There are some marsh lands to be had at \$10.00 per acre but they will probably not last long at that price. The marsh lands will require more time to prepare them for crops as they contain such a mass of tule roots except where the water is deep enough so that there are no tules, in that case they can be seeded to crops as soon as they are drained.

Ranches for dry farming and stock raising, with plenty of outside range can be had for, improved \$10 to \$20 per acre and unimproved \$5 to \$10 per acre. There is very little government land left, and practically none under the irrigation system except several thousand acres of the marsh lands, which have been withdrawn from entry, and when they are restored they will probably come in like the "Rosebud Agency," in Dakota. Also according to the irrigation act, the Secretary of the Interior may cut down the amount of each entry under any irrigation project to not less than 40 acres. Under irrigation here one does not need so much land as the farming will be more intensive, and it seems to me that the intelligent, industrious farmer in these valleys will within a very few years occupy a very enviable position. The hills and mountains abound in the finest saw timber awaiting the mills to turn it into lumber. While all kinds of stock do well, I am convinced especially since seeing what blue grass and white clover will do, with no mid-summer drought to cut it short, that this locality is undoubtedly adapted to a dairy business of a very high order. This also seems to be the home of the bee. Certainly the quality of honey produced here cannot be excelled.

The people here are of an intelligent enterprising and kind hearted class, most of whom are Americans, with a few English, German and Scandinavians.
The sparsely settled state of the community has necessarily rendered schools and churches somewhat scarce but the fact that, in spite of difficulties incident to lack of transportation, there is now under construction, in the county seat, a county high school building at a cost of \$29,500 and a building for the grades at a cost of \$18,000 speaks well for the people here from an educational standpoint.
There is a Presbyterian church and a Methodist church which have regular preaching, and I am told that the Baptists are getting ready to organize and build. Other towns in the valley are Merrill, Whitelake City, Bonanza and Dairy. I am sorry to say that all of the towns here seem to think it necessary for them to have saloons, but I hope to see the time when they will realize their mistake and be willing to correct it. I am told that a majority of the country people are in favor of this change. One of the great needs of this valley for all these years has been transportation. Now that Government irrigation is assured, there are two railroads preparing to build in here. One of these the California northeastern has purchased land for an addition to the town, and announced a few days since that it is now ready to begin the work of construction. This road comes from Weed, about 80 miles south of here on the Southern Pacific. The McCloud road is now under construction and has about 40 miles to build, to reach Lairds, at the lower end of the lower lake, where it will meet transportation by water. These are some of the facts as I see them, and as they have been reported to me from what seem to be reliable sources. This country and climate will not suit everybody, but here is rich soil very productive, with an abundance of water to irrigate it, at very reasonable prices.

The fact that the government is willing to expend in these valleys \$4,400,000 shows the confidence it has in these lands and waters after a year's thorough investigation by a corps of competent engineers. People are coming in every day by stage loads to look at the country and a large immigration is confidently expected. The vast amount of money to be expended here by the government and the railroads and by people opening up farms will undoubtedly make times lively here. The government engineers are now making surveys for the permanent location of the canals, and it is expected that they will soon be ready to let the contracts for the work of construction. Possibly I have omitted the very thing which someone desires to know. I shall be very glad to answer any inquiries the best I can. Please bear in mind the fact that if I am away out here at the edge of the earth, I am not forgetting the dear friends in Kansas. So long as I live they will always have a warm place in my heart. With kind regards and best wishes for everybody, I am
Yours Very Truly,
J. B. MASON.

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Jos. Koese, Klamath Falls.

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" Fall Creek 9:30 " "
" Klamath Springs 10:15 " "
" Dixie 11:00 " "
" Pokokama 11:45 " "
Leave Pokokama 12:45 A.M.
Arrive Dixie 10:45 A.M.
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" Steel Bridge 1:00 " "
" Bogus 1:45 P.M.
" Thrall 2:30 P.M.

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