

# The Birth and Growth of the Oregon State Agricultural Society

(John Minto, in Pacific Homestead, Salem, Or., September 13th.)

Prior to the discovery of gold in California the development of farming in Oregon had been very rapid for a virtually moneyless community, but it was nearly all in grain and stock raising; the consuming market was largely the annual immigration. This was somewhat arrested by the war against the Cayuses by the Whitman massacre, but still more by the discovery of gold in California. It would be safe to say that three-fourths of the effective farm labor went to the mines of California between September, 1848, and the same date of 1850. The full effects of this was not felt until the fall of 1853 when wheat went as high as \$6 per bushel at Salem for a short time.

The first stimulus to renewed attention to farming was the market for the rapid immigration to California offered. Everything fresh and wholesome to eat was in demand there, but fresh vegetables and fresh fruits maintained highest prices longest of any products we sent there. Henderson Luelling had introduced a very excellent nursery of the most popular fruits by hauling across the plains in 1847. Some of his trees were bearing specimens in 1850 and the fruit of those sent to San Francisco brought fabulous prices.

The desire to have fine fruits at home and for export too was the first surface influence towards farmers organization here. The first farmers' club, to the writer's knowledge, was formed at his residence in 1854, and fruit culture was the chief influence. The first County Agricultural Society formed was that of Marion County and the first state association formed was the Oregon Pomological Society, which held its first exposition at Salem.

Governor Davis was the first party within my knowledge to suggest the formation of an Oregon Agricultural Society, but the chief influences towards its consummation was amongst the active members of the Pomological Society—notably the Walling brothers, the Rynearson brothers, and the Barlows, of Multnomah and Clackamas counties. There were efforts to form County Agricultural societies being made in Yamhill and Linn counties and the people of the Willamette valley as a whole were very ready for a State Society at the time we became a state.

At the formative meeting, held at Salem, the State Pomological Society merged into it and its president, George Collier Robins, became its president. Clackamas county was fixed upon for holding the first State Fair and preparation made for it by a comparative few men of that county at an expense to them if my recollection serves, of some \$800 besides their labor and worry and, as this latter always falls on a comparatively few, these in this case saw by their first experience that the banks of the Clackamas were not a good place for holding a State Fair and were amongst the first to suggest the holding of the next nearer the heart of the Willamette valley.

The preparation for the second State Fair was a free offering to the citizenship of Yamhill, Linn, or Marion counties, until in May, 1862, and a correspondence was kept up by citizens of the former and Wm. J. Herren, president of the Marion County Agricultural Society, till it became apparent that if the latter body did not make preparation no fair would be held that year.

A committee was appointed to canvass Salem to see if citizens would help and Major Joseph Magdon and myself circulated a paper one day and found \$1700 was signed. Upon this, Charles Swegle, Louis Byrnes, and John Minto, were appointed a committee to provide material for a pavilion and fence around the ground (82 acres) through the northwest corner of which the railroad was subsequently laid. By great effort, of those having the management, the second State Fair was held at the ground on which fairs have been held ever since. All premiums were paid and the balancing of the books showed the Marion County Agricultural Society owner of 82 acres of land, an unpainted pavilion, and race stand, stables, and show pens, well, etc., and \$3600 in debt.

The question now before the managers of the Marion County Agricultural Society, whose entire membership was about forty and annual fee \$1 each while money cost from 10 per cent per annum to 3 per cent per month, was: What shall we do? The conclusion was: Sell the grounds and improvements for enough to pay the debt, and a committee of five, with R. C. Geer as chairman, was appointed to find a purchaser, if possible. Mr. Geer lived on his farm some distance from Salem and, with the first nucleus of a Shorthorn herd, South Down flock, a nursery of fruit trees, and a farm, was a busy man. The writer, as one of the committee, made an effort to see what could be done by another, subscription in Salem, after learning that Thomas Cross and Chas. Swegle were willing to give \$3000 for the property and take the gate fees as their compensation. The

head of one business firm in answer to an appeal for a second subscription in order to prevent the property going into private hands, said: "No, we gave liberally to start this and, if it must be a public burden, we are willing to pay our share of the taxes if the county will buy the grounds and hold them for public uses." On this suggestion the writer went home and drew up the form of a report of the committee in substance as follows: "Your committee, appointed to find a purchaser of the State Fair grounds, have found parties willing to give the sum of the indebtedness of the Marion County Agricultural Society for the property, but only on conditions which would throttle the State Agricultural Society, it believes; therefore recommends that instead of accepting that offer that an appeal be made to our county authorities to take the grounds for the sum of the debt and hold them for public uses as fairs, militia muster, etc." This was accepted as a report and the committee instructed to make the tender to the county judge, then the late John C. Peebles, who acceded to the proposition on condition that the sum be reduced to \$3000. This was done entirely by Marion county men, of whom Asahel Bush gave \$100.

The next meeting of the board of directors of the State Society received a gift of the grounds on condition that it hold a State Fair thereon for fifteen years consecutively, and such a fair has been held annually ever since. The public spirited citizens of Linn county in a few years found they had lost a good business opportunity and sent two of their best men (John Barrows and J. H. Douthitt) to see if there was any chance to break the arrangement, but they found there was not and so reported.

## OPENING ADDRESS AT THE FIRST FAIR.

We are pleased to print below in full the Opening Address delivered at the first annual fair of the Oregon State Agricultural Society, in Clackamas county, on Oct. 1, 2, 3 and 4, 1871. The address was by the President of the Society, S. Francis, and we are sure all of our readers will find it interesting. It will afford glimpses for comparison. Following is the address:

Men and Women of Oregon: The duty has been assigned me of opening the First Oregon State Fair. The officers of the State Agricultural Society for months have directed their efforts to bring before the people of Oregon the Exhibition that now greets your eyes. In those efforts they have

triumphed. You are to see others that many of you would regard as pictures of fancy were I to present them.

To assist you in the performance of your duties—to render your labors pleasant and profitable—to make you realize the high position that belongs to you as American farmers—the great industrial class of this great country—is the paramount object of the establishment of the Oregon State Agricultural Society, and the Exhibitions annually, in great state fairs, of the productions of agriculture—of specimens of the mechanical arts—of the fine arts as connected with improved life—the improvements in household economy, giving to man those home comforts which are among the leading blessings left us of the fall.

The exhibitions now presented to you ought not to be passed over without investigation. There are specimens of that noble animal, the horse, of all the classes usually desired by farmers. There is the thoroughbred horse, with the high qualities of endurance which passes over the earth with the fleetness of the wind. There is the roadster, beautiful in his proportions, with the eye of the eagle, the admiration of all. There is the horse of all work, the main dependence of the farmer, for the plow, the wagon, the carriage, and for riding. There is the colossal draft horse for the heavy work of the farm and the road, and which is deemed essential in the heavy dray work of cities. Then, too, are the Durham and Devon cattle, beautiful in proportions, such as farmers of taste love to look upon, and such as the consumers of fine beef are glad to purchase. There are also the sheep—the long-wooled Cotswold and the Oxfordshire, which yield large quantities of wool and heavy carcasses; there are the Southdowns, middle-wooled sheep, producing fair quantities of wool and flesh, prized by the epicure; and there, too, are the varieties of the Merino, which produce the choicest wools to be found in our markets. And there are the imported swine—most desirable stock for the farmers of Oregon. There, too, is your fruit, the cereals, and vegetables. Pomona never presided over a more glorious exhibition than that presented before us. And there are the implements of agriculture, improved by the genius of American mechanics, to lighten the toils and increase the profits of the farmer. And we have an exhibition here, I might say almost a Divine institution—for surely God put it into the heart of his servants, to construct it—the sewing machine—to lighten the labors of women, to save her from nights and days of weariness—to give

us what you should not only appreciate the difference in appearance between a Cayuse pony and a thoroughbred horse, but become impressed with the necessity of improvement in your stock of horses. We want you to understand that there is as much difference in the value of the scrub and the Durham or Devon steer, as there is presented in their appearance. We want you to examine the sheep, and make up your own minds as to the profit of raising the different varieties. We want you, too, to look well to the swine and satisfy yourselves whether it would not pay you better to raise this improved stock than the alligator race now seen upon many

this Society and its active friends asked for a small pittance from its lands to give this Society a start upon what I believe will be a glorious career. We told them that this had been done in all the states, and that it had operated to stimulate industry, to increase the amount of taxable property, and would pay back to the treasury a hundred fold for the means that thus would be withdrawn from it. We pointed them to the action and results in the richest and most prosperous agricultural states of this Union. We called their attention to the weakness of this Society, its needs, and to the advantages that

and Beta, the Pointers in the Great Dipper, which are only five degrees apart.

The stranger is known as Brooke's Comet, being named after its discoverer, and will very soon take its departure, never to return. "How can we know this?" some may ask. A scientist would gravely reply: "Because the path of the comet is presumably parabolic," which simply means that the comet is traveling in a parabola, or open curve, having two branches stretching away into space and always getting further apart. The shape of this grand curve explains why so many comets only appear to us once. The comet approaches a focus one of the branches of the parabola, whirls around the sun at a terrific rate of speed, and then retreats along the other branch, gradually disappearing in the depths of space.

A shell used in bombarding a town from a distance describes us it rises and then slopes down again, just as a mighty parabola. So does a tennis ball thrown by the hand. In fact, every time a schoolboy throws a ball into the air it describes a part of that beautiful curve known as a parabola, making due allowances for a twisting curve sometimes given by a skillful player, consisting in throwing the ball in such a way that it shall not move in a parabola. Recognizing the fact that this is our only opportunity for observing our celestial visitor, we should at least take an occasional look at it, providing we are the fortunate owners of a telescope, or at least look in the direction in which we know it is to be found. Knowing the comet is there, although we are unable to see it with the unaided eye, and talking possibilities for granted, since it doubtless resembles all well regulated comets, we can easily let our imagination fill in the details.

From all accounts this comet is brighter than most small comets which deign to visit the realm of King Sun, and it has been attracting considerable attention in the astronomical world during the last few weeks. It probably has a head from ten to twenty thousand miles in diameter, for a comet with a head less than ten thousand miles in diameter would stand little chance of discovery. Yet such a head, though insignificant compared with cometary heads from forty to one hundred thousand miles, is large in comparison with our planet earth, which is somewhat less than eight thousand miles in diameter.

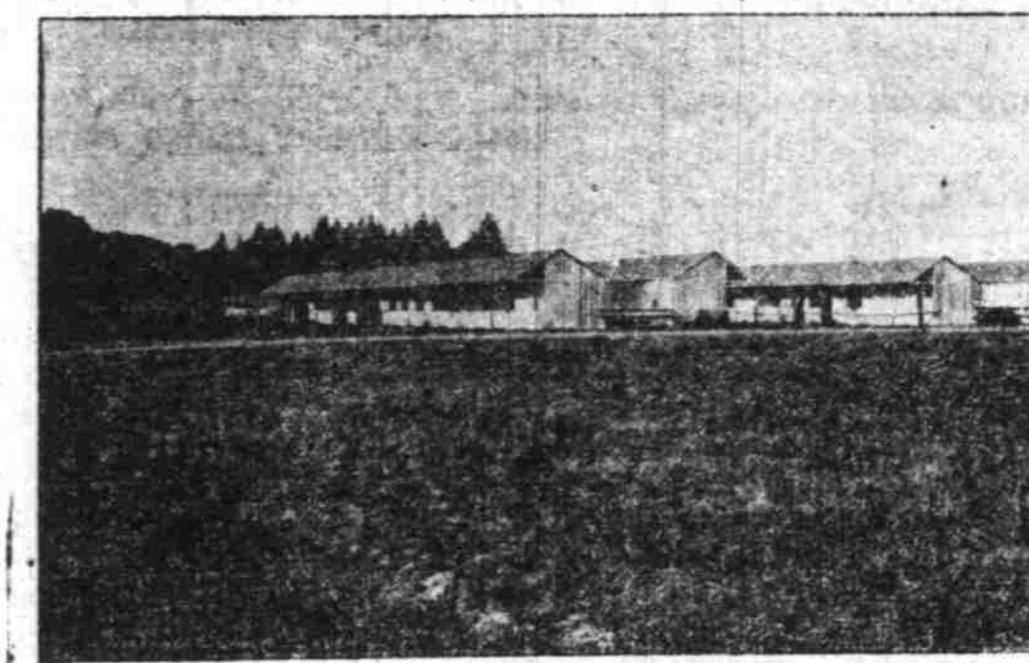
The comet now on view may also be the proud owner of a train many millions of miles in length, for a comet's train is seldom less than from five to ten million miles and in some cases has been known to exceed one hundred million miles. Such a train could reach from the sun to the earth and extend nearly seven million miles beyond, since the sun is about thirty-three millions of miles distant from the earth. Despite the enormous size of comets, their mass is apparently insignificant. Some writers have gone so far as to say that a comet, properly packed, could be carried about in a lady's or a man's pocket, which is a somewhat extravagant assertion. Professor Young tells us that the total amount of matter in a comet of any size probably be estimated at many millions of tons.

As to the nature of comets we know very little, except that they are made of such flimsy material that it is possible to see stars through the dustiest part of the train and even through the head. They are composed largely of gaseous carbon, magnesium and sodium and probably iron, though that is not certain. The comet may be composed of a swarm of molecular stones, widely separated, but whether these stones are many feet in diameter or only small particles of dust no one can say.

These strange wanderers through space rush along at a rate far exceeding the speed of a cannon ball, the speed increasing as the comet whirls around the sun, but gradually decreasing as it recedes from its neighborly lord, until, as it withdraws into the depths of space, it apparently creeps along as though were on its homeward journey. As it recedes it becomes more and more indistinct, until it gets beyond the reach even of the largest telescopes in the world. This is what is actually taking place with regard to the comet which is at present attracting our attention, so we should avail ourselves of every opportunity to observe our rapidly vanishing guest, especially as we can never see it again.

Professor W. B. Brooks, of Geneva, N. Y., has been particularly successful in comet hunting, and has already found twenty or more of these celestial wanderers.

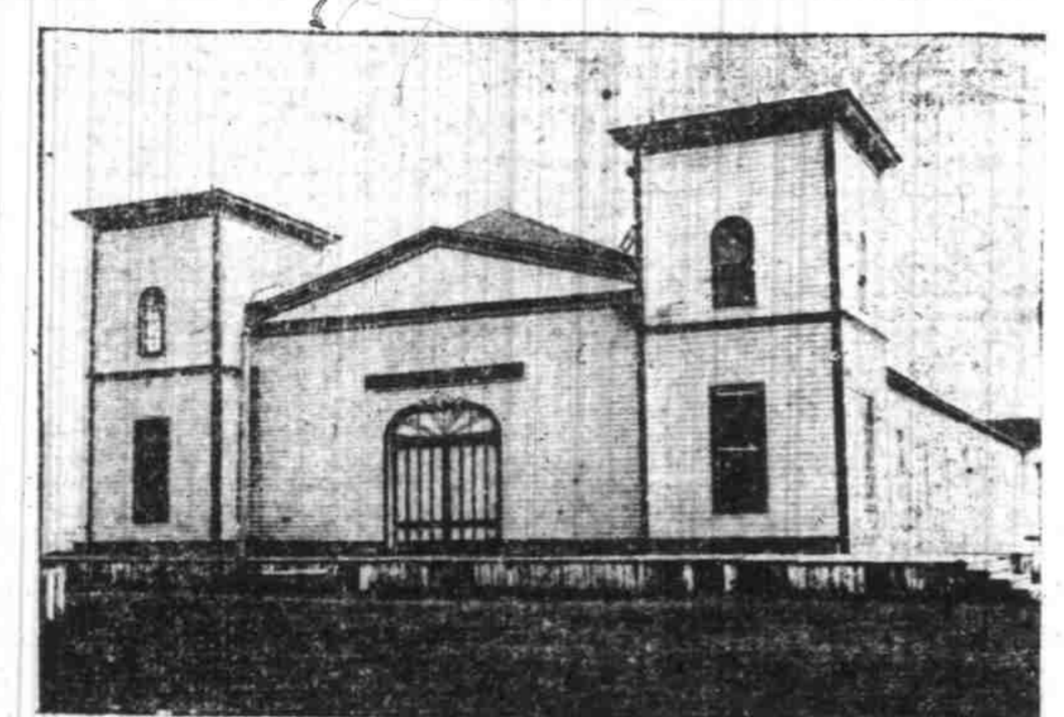
There is a stranger in our midst, but few seem aware of the fact. Yet this stranger is a most distinguished personage, having come from the depths of space—we know not whence—and will eventually recede into the depths of space—we know not whither. It occupies at present an exalted position overhead, about seven degrees from Polaris, the Pole Star, and below that star, seven degrees is a little more than the distance between Alpha



CATTLE AND HORSE STALLS, OREGON STATE FAIR GROUNDS.



POULTRY BUILDING, OREGON STATE FAIR GROUNDS.



PAVILION, OREGON STATE FAIR GROUNDS, AT SALEM.

been assisted by many valued friends scattered up and down our state; and to none are they more indebted than to the worthy farmers and other citizens of Clackamas county.

We stand here today where but a few years ago roamed the wild beasts of the forest, and the wilder man, in all their savage natures. Indeed, until within twelve years I might say, that with the exception of some remote and isolated spots in this great territory, there was not a gleam of civilization or improvement. Farms, villages, towns, cities, have sprung up and are presenting themselves all over the land; and there are causes now moving—based upon the development of our mineral and agricultural wealth—which are to add to our population—give incentives to agricultural industry—and which will culminate in the realization of all our hopes of human progress in this beautiful valley—which, in a few years, will be teem with people; its lands will be cultivated as a garden; wealth will be here; all the comforts and blessings of civilized life, as found in those institutions which elevate and ennoble man, will make the valley of the Willamette the gem of the Pacific Coast. The finger of Providence points to these high results—if the men of this day perform their duties to themselves and their children, which are sternly required at their hands.

I see the pioneers of this great work before me. The battle of many a year of toil you have manfully fought. The improvements scattered everywhere, attest your industry. But you have still more to do. You are still to progress in the path of labor. You are living now to witness some of its

her a new lease of life—and enable her to accomplish other high duties which belong to her sex and condition. And here, too, are the evidences of the handiwork of women—in the exhibition of condiments, in textile fabrics, and needle work in great variety and beauty—all of which add to the sweetness and joys of home. And there, again, are specimens of the artist's art, in their peculiar line, by which man has drawn powers from the sun to imprint indelibly in a moment the lineaments of our features, which are a solace to friends in absence, whether it be for a brief period or for that from which there is no return. And then there are cabinets of natural history, of birds and animals and minerals of Oregon. How few of these before me have investigated this array of interesting and important subjects? And there are the contributions from the woolen manufactory of Salem—the first woolen manufactory of Oregon—which consumes your wool—which supplies your clothing—which saves to Oregon, to its farmers, to its people, furnishing essential fabrics for our use, every year more than one hundred thousand dollars. Speed the day when we shall have manufactories of all the articles of the first necessity, on all the streams, which make a grand feature of our lovely valley. Other facts and articles will demand the attention and study of our friends—young and old—the man in years, the matron—your daughters, and your sons.

All these exhibitions are for a practical purpose. They are here for your investigation. We want you to examine them and to examine them well.

fruits, the cereals, the vegetables, and see if you can learn ought to benefit you. We desire you, farmers, to make a thorough investigation of the agricultural machinery. The genius of man has been directed for the last few years to the invention of agricultural machinery, greatly for your benefit. There are now present many new implements worthy of your examination.

We want the ladies, too, to look at all these things, and more especially we want them to look at the departments which more particularly belong to them. See that butter—that cheese! How do they rebuke the foul labels that have been inflicted upon Oregon? We have the climate, we have the kine, we have the grasses, we have the women who can beat the world in making butter and cheese. Does any living man doubt this fact? Let them examine the rich gatherings in the department of farm products. We want the ladies, too, to witness the performances of the sewing machine; to examine the specimens of fine work and articles of household economy, the work of their sisters, on exhibition. In my judgment there is much to admire and to learn. And let me say one word here to the ladies—or rather to the women, for to my mind ladies is an effeminate term; we must have your countenance, and your support, and your presence at these state fairs, or they will be well nigh a failure. I am glad you are here. I rejoice to see you. It is a grand feature of our exhibition. I hope these state fairs will do much for you—to lighten in some respects your toils—to make you feel your importance as wives and mothers and daughters of farmers and mechanics. God bless you, women of Oregon!

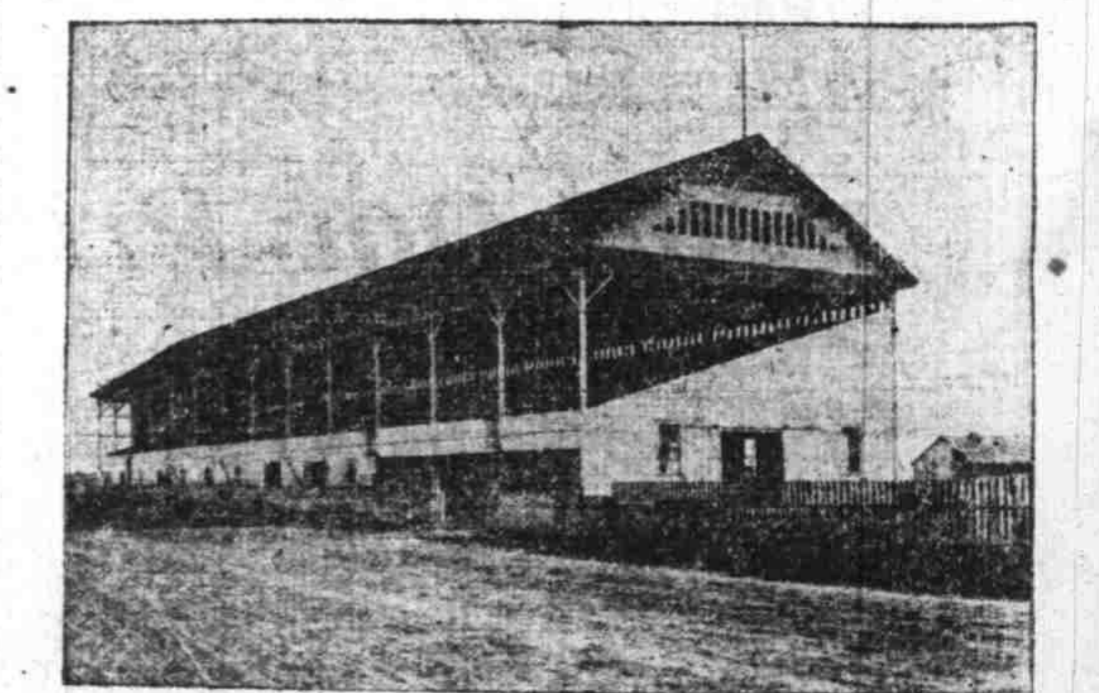
And now some remarks to the sterner sex. This exhibition, too, I repeat, is for your benefit. It will be a waste of money, of time, of toil, if it does not do you good. When you go to your homes, may you have learned much that will be useful—that will stimulate you in the performance of your duties upon the farm—that will give zest and pleasure to your labors by the union of mind and muscle. A cloud has hung over Oregon. It will rise, and with your efforts the period will be near when you will enjoy, in the reward of your industry, all the blessings that can justly belong to us. I wish here to say a few words which shall sink deep into the hearts of the farmers and mechanics, and other men interested in agriculture, now before me. The great interest of this state is agricultural. The welfare of all other interests depends upon its success. A very large part of the property of this state belongs to its farmers. You pay a large proportion of the taxes. It is from your pockets that the treasury is filled. At the last session of the legislature,

such justice would secure to our people. Their answer was No! I now say to you that when such men again seek your suffrages for the legislative answer them, No! When men come to you and tell you of your high position as American farmers—that you are the bone and muscle and sinew of the country, and solicit your votes for seats in the legislature, and will not pledge themselves to measures for the great interests of Oregon, in every form in which they can be presented, answer them, No! Could my voice on this subject reach the farmers of every mountain and valley, hill and dale of Oregon, I would say to them send men to the legislature in whom you have faith, who will act for your interests—who will respond to your reasonable requests—and to those that hesitate, who speak doubtfully, answer with all the energy of freedom: No! No!

It only remains for me to declare that the first fair of the Oregon State Agricultural Society is now open for the examination of all who have favored us with their attendance.

## WILL FOLLOW BRYAN.

Toledo, O., Sept. 13. Mayor Jones today, in a card to the public, declines to stand as a candidate for Congress, but declares his intention of supporting Bryan for President.



GRAND STAND, OREGON STATE FAIR GROUNDS.

## NEW STRANGER IN HEAVENS.

Mary Proctor Writes About the Latest Brooke's Comet.

There is a stranger in our midst, but few seem aware of the fact. Yet this stranger is a most distinguished personage, having come from the depths of space—we know not whence—and will eventually recede into the depths of space—we know not whither. It occupies at present an exalted position overhead, about seven degrees from Polaris, the Pole Star, and below that star, seven degrees is a little more than the distance between Alpha

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Bears the Signature of *Chas. H. Pritchard*