

MUCH LAND IN OREGON OPEN TO SETTLEMENT

Early Experience in California Duplicated in Her Sister State by Neglect

(By Horace Stevens in Sacramento Bee.)

Belieged by her own light for upward of half a century, the manifest destiny of Oregon is rapidly becoming realized, and the time is not far distant when those seeking cheap and profitable homes will awaken to the multitude of golden opportunities that exist in this state. It is practically the only remaining public land state in the Union where the old refrain that "Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm," possesses any genuine significance, because there are millions of acres of unappropriated government land yet remaining within its borders, a large proportion of which is susceptible to the highest degree of agricultural and horticultural development upon any kind of intelligent basis.

According to the last annual report of the commissioner of the general land office, issued in November, 1907, there are 17,730,000 acres of land still subject to public entry in Oregon, out of a total area of 66,000,866 acres—equivalent to more than one-quarter of the whole. Divided into tracts of legal subdivision, this would provide homestead or timber claims to 160 acres each for fully 110,000 persons or heads of families, and insure holdings for an additional active population of at least 500,000 even when computed upon the theory that each claimant would take the maximum quantity he would be entitled to locate under the homestead or timber land laws.

In many portions of Oregon, 40, or even 20, acres is ample to support a family in reasonable comfort, because the climatic conditions are such that the areas named are capable of greater productive qualities than four-fold that amount in less favored regions, providing earnest and intelligent effort is directed to tillage. It stands to reason that soil sufficiently prolific to produce the magnificent forests abounding in Oregon is assuredly suitable for the growth of apple and other fruit trees that have brought fame to various sections of the state, and whose products find a ready sale at attractive figures in every market of the world.

Instances are common where "logged-off" lands, enriched by the leaf mold of generations, have produced record-breaking crops of all kinds throughout the northwest, and when it is considered that the sale of timber and fuel from such tracts usually defray all expenses of clearing, the inference is obvious. The constant moisture throughout the "growing" season in the western portion of Oregon operates as a perpetual insurance of bounteous crops, and reduces the risk of any kind of failure to a minimum. Moreover, it has a tendency to counteract the ravages of pests to a large extent, and it is noteworthy that fruits and cereals from this region are rated highly in all markets, and bring corresponding prices. Frosts are also of comparatively rare occurrence where so much humidity exists in the atmosphere, so that the dangers from this source are scarcely considered seriously. It is a mistaken idea, too, that because of the abnormal rainfall prevailing during a considerable portion of three seasons that it is productive of extraordinary hardships. On the contrary, it is of uniform gentleness in character as to impose slight inconvenience, and it is one of the ironies of the situation that every true Oregonian yearns for the invigorating showers that have come to be regarded as the harbingers of general benefit.

Another important factor to be taken into consideration in connection with products of the soil is the question of easy and cheap transportation and in this respect nature has been unusually kind to Oregon. The magnificent Columbia river, flowing east and west, and navigable for hundreds of miles through a rich agricultural and lumber-producing region, forms the boundary between Oregon and Washington, and deep-water ships come to Portland without difficulty and take on enormous cargoes for all parts of the globe. Such great depth has this river, in fact, that last summer the protected cruiser Charleston, with a mean draft of 22 1/2 feet, and a normal displacement of 9700 tons, experienced

no difficulty whatsoever in steaming into Portland harbor, in the Willamette river, more than 100 miles from the mouth of the Columbia. There is no doubt the depth of water on the Columbia bar is ample to accommodate the largest ships of any navy, and arrangements are already in progress to have the battleship squadron of Admiral Evans visit this port when it comes to the coast this year.

The Willamette, draining the fertile Willamette valley, is navigable as far as Eugene, a distance of about 150 miles, for light-draft craft. It pursues a northerly course, hence the waterways divide the state in the form of an immense T, and provide an effective check against any monopolistic tendencies of railway transportation companies.

Statistics show that Portland, the metropolis of the state, is the most healthy city in the United States, its annual death-rate scarcely exceeding six out of every 1000 inhabitants. Two immense sewers, calculated to drain the hitherto neglected Irvington and Brooklyn districts of the municipality, no in process of construction, will, when completed, undoubtedly materially reduce even the present low death-rate, hence it would be interesting to calculate the exact measure of human existence upon the basis of the combined sources of pure atmosphere, incomparable water and magnificent sanitary conditions generally prevailing in this model city. As a matter of fact, nowhere else on earth, perhaps, can such an aggregation of contentions be found as exists in the confines of Oregon and instances are numerous where men and women have passed the century mark in full possession of all their faculties, while golden weddings anniversaries have ceased to excite comment. Mrs. Mary Ramsey Wood, considered one of the oldest human beings on earth, is a resident of Hillsboro, Or., and is still reasonable hale and hearty after an existence of more than 120 years, the greater portion of which period has been passed in this state.

The land-fraud trials, which were supposed to have brought so much unpleasant notoriety upon the commonwealth, as a matter of fact, produced quite the opposite effect, because it was considered, from the standard of development incident to the various legal proceedings, that some extraordinary motive must have inspired such a wrongful system of acquiring titles, powerful enough in its incentive to move men to criminal expedients that the road through honest attainment might be shortened. It was obvious that men are not likely to risk liberty and reputation in pursuit of something unworthy the effort, and not of a sufficiently alluring character to excite to the last degree every instinct of human cupidity. It was reasoned, in brief, that a robber rarely seeks any plunder that is unsurrounded with positive evidence of value.

Almost every western state has had its predominating influences, and in the mad rush to satisfy some prevailing craving, many of the legitimate industries have either been temporarily disregarded or else completely buried in the pursuit of an absorbing idea that might, after all, have possessed less intrinsic merit than some overlooked in the scramble. "The stone that the builders rejected has become the head of the corner," has its parallel in many ways in connection with western history. The great rush for gold in the pioneer days of California obscured every other consideration for many years, and it was only when the emergencies of the situation directed attention to other channels that the vast agricultural possibilities of her valleys and plains became apparent, and lent emphasis to the idea that "man's necessity, is God's opportunity."

First it was the rich bottom lands along her rivers and streams that invited, because here the results were regarded as more certain and conditions less strenuous. Then the arid plains were resorted to, and those possessed of seemingly more favored holdings scoffed at the idea that these so-called "deserts" could be conquered with the plow and made to yield any profitable return.

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Irrigation solved that problem in short order, however, and it is part of the record that the waste lands of the Sacramento valley and San Joaquin valley of California are today the backbone of her agricultural and horticultural resources.

Next in order came the bushy foothills, and again skepticism played an important part in the proceedings. Those taking up government homestead claims were looked upon as mentally unbalanced in their expectation or realizing anything from such seemingly scant inducements; but with that indomitable Anglo-Saxon pluck and enterprise that has made its mark upon every human endeavor, immigration flocked in from the older eastern states, and upon the "dumps" and "tailings" of those mining camps that had been instrumental in creating history in the palmy days of '49, there has been produced quality of fruit that has challenged every section for its superior. It proved to be in the "thermal belt"—the boundary between the frosts of the lower levels and the snow-line of higher altitudes—and in consequence the yield of citrus and deciduous fruits from this source alone has thrown a golden shower into the coffers of the commonwealth that has rivalled the magnificent wealth of her mines.

It is easy enough to confirm this idea: Go to any United States or state land office of the west, and select at random any township within its borders where profitable agricultural pursuits are carried on at the present time. Have an abstract of title made showing all the original entries therein, and I venture to state that in a majority of cases, the first entries in the township rank lower on the assessment roll of the county where the land is situated than claims taken up many years afterwards.

The recent financial flurry is almost certain to have its compensating advantages in the way of directing attention to the development of hitherto dormant resources, and diverting money from its normal course of speculation into the natural channels of safe investment. In no essential feature is this idea more clearly conveyed than by the prediction that real estate of all kinds is certain to feel the effects of the changed conditions more than anything else, as it is obvious that those seeking investment will ultimately come to realize that land is the basis of all security, and will prefer this stable depository rather than risk their savings to the mercies of unknown quantity in the shape of a banking institution. Such a situation will have great weight in the proper development of the Oregon country, and cannot fail to operate

Often The Kidneys Are Weakened by Over-Work.

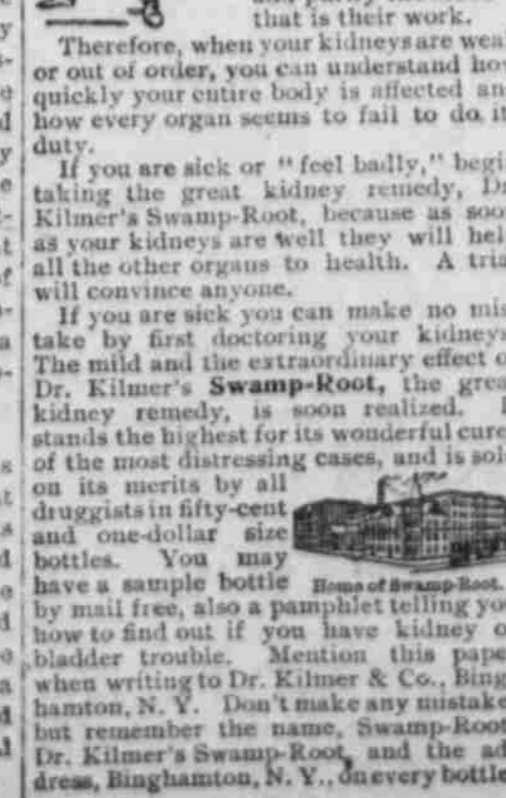
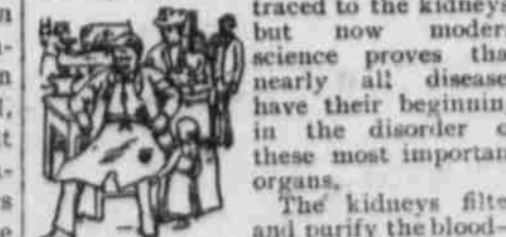
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Portland, Or., December 24.

Worst of All the Wreckers.

San Francisco, Jan. 3.—That \$1,000,000 was falsely added to the assets of the California Safe Deposit & Trust Company to deceive the state commissioners is one of the statements in the confession made by H. L. Storrs, one of the bookkeepers of the bank and confidential agent of J. Dalzell Brown.

This confession adds another sensational chapter to the defunct bank scandal. Storrs broke down under a merciless cross-examination and confessed that the entries in the books were in his handwriting, and had been made under orders from Brown and J. D. Robertson, the fugitive assistant secretary.

The confession made by Storrs was complete in every respect. Besides this, the fact that nearly \$1,000,000 had been falsely added to the assets of the bank shows that \$500,000,000 was falsely added to the account of Brown, Walter J. Bartlett and the San Francisco and San Joaquin Coal Company alone. In order to balance the books Storrs said that a like sum had been charged against the depositors in the bank.

The confession of Storrs was made in the bank building at California and Montgomery streets, after he had been subjected to a searching examination by Assistant District Attorney Hoffcock and Theodore Kytka, the handwriting expert.

Storrs at first denied that he had anything to do with the false entries, but when confronted with the proof, as revealed by Kytka's microscope, his nerve broke down and the tears told what his trembling lips would not. Finally he gained his composure.

"Yes, it is true," he said. "I made those entries." I made the changes as directed by Mr. Brown and Mr. Robertson," and then he told the entire story of the glaring fraud. The confession of Storrs will lead to the indictment of Brown and Robertson, but it is believed that Storrs will not be held.

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Call for City Warrants. Notice is hereby given that there are funds on hand applicable to the payment of all warrants of the City of Salem drawn on the general fund and endorsed "Not paid for want of funds" on or before January 3, 1908. Holders of said warrants will please present them for payment at the office of the undersigned, No. 129 South Commercial street, as interest will cease from and after this date.
FRANK MEREDITH,
City Treasurer.
Salem, Oregon, January 4, 1908.
1-4-10t

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