

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.

Value of Land Entries in the State, \$4,829,783.

NUMBER OF ACRES, 2,533,993.

Rural Population of Washington Increased 64,000 Souls.

Public Area Passing Into Hands of Tillers of Soil, to be Reclaimed and Transformed Into Fertile Fields—Reports From the Several Land Districts.

The progress of Washington as a state cannot be viewed from a lesser point of vantage than from the reports of the United States local land offices in the state, of which there are seven, namely: Seattle, Vancouver, Walla Walla, Spokane Falls, Yakima, Olympia and Waterville. It should be understood that the government records show only virgin soil taken up by the private individual, and not the vast acreage annually brought under the plow by hardy settlers. Still the magnitude showing made should forever silence the croaker, the burden of whose song is that Washington's cities are growing beyond that of the rural districts. The total acreage entered under the several acts of congress and lands purchased from the government is not as large as that of 1889, owing entirely to the parsimony of congress in refusing the state of Washington a sufficient appropriation to keep public surveys abreast of the demands of settlers.

In the state of Washington there are 44,796,400 acres of land, less than one-half as much as in the state of California, and this amount 1,973,893.13 acres passed from the hands of the government to that of private individuals within the past twelve months, and of this vast domain 822,920.13 were filed upon or entered through the Seattle office.

During the year 1889 the entries throughout the state aggregated 2,544,214 acres, representing \$4,019,536, in purchase price of lands, fees and commissions, plus \$38,782 acres sold by the Northern Pacific Railroad Company at an estimated value of \$1,945,910. Of this reclaimed area Eastern Washington foots up to 908,782 acres, while the western portion of the state rolls up a total of 1,635,432.35 acres. It is but fair to add to the cost price of these lands a reasonable sum as expenditures made by settlers during the year. Basing such an estimate at \$150 per entry we thus have an outlay of \$2,608,550 in preliminary acts of reclaiming heretofore wild land. The year 1889, ending December 31, shows that 1,973,893.13 acres were disposed of by the government and 660,000 acres by the Northern Pacific railroad, making a total of 2,533,893.13 acres. The price paid for the government lands, together with fees and commissions, amounts to \$1,829,783.13, which added to the \$3,000,000, the price received for railroad grant lands, makes a total of \$4,829,783.13 expended for new lands and embraced in 7,570 entries exclusive of those sold by the Northern Pacific Railroad Company. Estimating each of these entries at their actual value of \$150, the preliminary improvements on their claim we would have a total expenditure of \$1,180,500, which added to the amount paid for the lands brings it to a grand total of \$6,010,283.13. Of this vast sum over \$4,000,000 went east during the past twelve months to pay for these lands. Computing each entryman to have a family of two, besides himself, we thus have an increase of 23,610 in the purely agricultural population of the state as directly shown from the land office records. The decrease in the number of entries made during the past year as well as the acreage accounted for are shown, first, owing to the business of the year 1889 in the Seattle district being swelled to enormous proportions by reason of the policy of the former administration in "holding up" entries, some 850 old entries have fallen to the present officers of the Seattle district upon their entering office; and secondly, owing to the lack of available land and consequent dearth of land available for settlement. It is roughly estimated that in Western Washington there are 2,000,000 acres of unsurveyed land now held by settlers under "squatters' rights," which, taken at 100 acres per individual, would show 13,000 settler families, multiplied by three, representing the family, would give a total of 40,000, which added to the 23,610 above given, would show the rural population to be increased by 64,110 souls.

The business transacted in the several land districts is here shown, giving the reader a fair idea of the relative growth of the several sections of the state:

Table with columns: DISTRICT, ENTRIES, No., Acres, and Fees. Rows include Walla Walla District, Vancouver Land District, Spokane Falls Land District, and North Yakima District.

Estimated total number of entries 1,929, with an aggregate of 308,782 acres and a total of fees and commissions amounting to \$122,200. With the multiple of three we find the rural portions of this district augmented by 5,787 persons through the settlement of its wild land.

Table with columns: ENTRIES, No., Acres, and Fees. Rows include Homestead entries, Final homesteads, Cash entries, Pre-emption dec. stat., Coal dec. stat., Timber culture, and Timber land applications.

The following statistics relative to the earnings, salaries of registers and receivers, and the revenue to the United States from the four old offices for the last fiscal year were issued by the secretary of the interior department in Washington City, December 15.

North Yakima—Earnings of register and receiver, \$8,047; amount paid to register and receiver, \$6,000; amount received as homestead and timber culture fees, \$3,500. Seattle—Earnings of register and receiver, \$48,799; amount paid to register and receiver, \$4,000; amount received as homestead and timber culture fees, \$4,450. Spokane Falls—Earnings of register and receiver, \$17,817; amount paid to register and receiver, \$6,000; amount received as homestead and timber culture fees, \$4,450. Walla Walla—Earnings of register and receiver, \$8,154; amount paid to register and receiver, \$6,000; amount received as homestead and timber culture fees, \$2,570.

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STAVEL & WALKER.

Their Growth Identical With North-Western Development.

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About the first of February Stavel & Walker will be in their new building on Commercial street at the corner of Washington, where they will carry the finest line of carriages and vehicles in the West, making a specialty of the latest work.

In their heavy machinery department they have a complete stock of the latest work of a man who has had twenty-three years experience in planning, building and running the largest mills on the continent. They make a specialty of furnishing plans and details for modern mills of any capacity, and have arrangements with leading eastern manufacturers whereby they can meet any competitor on any scale of goods. Stavel & Walker are prepared to furnish the finest grades of waterwheels, steam engines of from two to 500 horse-power, and they represent the finest list of Corliss engines extant.

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A Good Project.

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The present syndicate formed will not be materially affected by this stringency, as it is composed of men who will build the road for the direct benefit of the property, and who are amply able to build it independent of outside aid. The company will be organized and surveys begun immediately after the holidays, thus enabling active construction to begin early in the spring. After the close of the rainy season the South Park Land and Improvement Company will intend to inaugurate a system of improvements at South Park which will be a great boon to the laboring men and mechanics. Their plan will be to build upon their reserve property cottages at a cost of about \$1,000 each, which together with the lots will be sold upon the installment plan, the purchaser paying no greater than the ordinary rental would amount to. Everybody living in Seattle is acquainted with the property, its accessibility and desirability for homes, and it is needless to repeat that it is situated on the most productive bottom land, cleared and surrounded by grand scenery and all the comforts of homelike life.

In addition to the South Park plan the company owns a large amount of acreage in the adjacent locality and will devote the coming year to the improvement and sale of this property.

For full information call upon or address the company at their general offices, located on south side of Yesler square, at foot of Front street, Lock box 1,333, Telephone 336, Seattle, Wash. D. C.

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Over 900 loans have been placed and only in a single instance has it been necessary to foreclose upon the security, and in this case the property mortgaged sold for more than the amount of the principal loan. This unsurpassed record is due in a large measure to the care the company has at all times exercised in the selection of loans. No lands with only a speculative value are ever accepted as security. Loans upon real estate located in the city of Seattle are made only upon inside improved property. Loans upon farms and property connected with the Puget Sound region, and are made only after a thorough investigation of the security and the character of the applicant. Every loan negotiated by the company is guaranteed, principal and interest, and is payable at the American Exchange National Bank, New York. The rapid development of the state of Washington and the unrivaled yet substantial growth of Seattle, combined with their superior natural advantages, have materially strengthened the safety of all loans made by the company. The most careful investor after an investigation of the resources of the state cannot fail to be struck with the fact that there is no safer field in the country for investments judiciously placed.

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THE UNSERVED AREA.

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To one intending to make a home on public land, I would say, select the locality which you wish to live in. If the land is surveyed, secure a tracing of the township; then go to the neighborhood, and, if you are an actual settler and intend making yourself a part of the community, information will be immediately and cheerfully furnished you as to desirable locations and tracts. If, on the other hand, you go with the purpose merely of exercising one of your rights and intend after making a colorable claim to take advantage of the law to abandon the tract, you will be apt to receive a cool reception all around.

The intending settler on unserved land should be especially careful that his claim does not trench upon that of a prior settler. While the government does not directly recognize any rights to squatter claims, yet, as between two persons claiming the right to enter the tract of land after survey, the preference will be given the prior settler. The decisions also are to the effect that after due settlement has been made and residence commenced great latitude will be allowed a settler in good faith on unserved land to be a way from his claim.

A settler should also be cautioned about settling on sections 16 and 36 of each township. By section 16 of the enabling act, admitting Washington as a state, sections 16 and 36, both surveyed and unsurveyed, provided they are not mineral in character, pass absolutely to the state. So that any settler on unserved land, who may chance to settle on either of these sections subsequent to the admission of the state would have either to lose his claim or purchase the land from the state.

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THE UNSERVED AREA.

The surveyed public lands of Western Washington are fast being disposed of; in fact, there cannot be more than 200,000 acres of unserved land in any portion of the state that are now subject to entry, while there are in round numbers 2,500,000 acres as yet unserved. These unserved lands comprise some of the best farming, timber and mineral land of the state, and though nearly all at present are being taken up by the homestead and pre-emption laws, the largest amount of unserved land, and that in which settlers would be more apt to secure lands suitable for agriculture, are in the eastern portion of Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, King and Lewis counties, also on the western and southwestern slopes of the Olympic mountains.

To one intending to make a home on public land, I would say, select the locality which you wish to live in. If the land is surveyed, secure a tracing of the township; then go to the neighborhood, and, if you are an actual settler and intend making yourself a part of the community, information will be immediately and cheerfully furnished you as to desirable locations and tracts. If, on the other hand, you go with the purpose merely of exercising one of your rights and intend after making a colorable claim to take advantage of the law to abandon the tract, you will be apt to receive a cool reception all around.

The intending settler on unserved land should be especially careful that his claim does not trench upon that of a prior settler. While the government does not directly recognize any rights to squatter claims, yet, as between two persons claiming the right to enter the tract of land after survey, the preference will be given the prior settler. The decisions also are to the effect that after due settlement has been made and residence commenced great latitude will be allowed a settler in good faith on unserved land to be a way from his claim.