

# OREGON HISTORY WRITERS AND THEIR MATERIALS

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Our Oregon history is not a detached narrative. The various stages of discovery, exploration, fur trade, acquisition, migration, settlement, Indian subjugation, gold activity, transportation, industrial progress, each forms a story, each linked with the others and with the annals of the world and of our nation. Hence, the investigator finds large part of the materials to be outside Oregon libraries; in the governmental departments of the national capital; in the collections of historical societies of Missouri, Nebraska, Montana, Kansas, Wisconsin, California, South Dakota, and Washington state; in missionary and seafaring documents of New England; in exploration and diplomatic records of London and Madrid. Scrutiny of the materials gives two distinct ideas: First, of the immensity of the field and the variety of the record, much of it yet unused; second, of the need of industry and talent, both historical and literary, in bringing the history to authentic and public reading.

In preparing this paper, the writer finds it impossible to present anything that is new. The best he can do is to shift the viewpoint of survey. We hear nowadays a great deal about "canned" thought; just as we read about "canned" music and "canned" fruits. The writer has used the results of the labor of others, especially of Charles W. Smith, associate librarian, University of Washington Library, and Eleanor Ruth Lockwood, reference librarian, Portland library, who have compiled lists of authors and materials. He is also indebted to Nellie B. Pipes, assistant secretary and librarian of the Oregon Historical Society, for many valuable suggestions.

When first contemplating the subject of Oregon history

writers, the author of this paper was tempted to discuss the Oregon writers of history, since this gathering is held under the auspices of the Oregon Writers' League. There are many Oregon writers, and their works are indispensable sources of reference; among them being Frances Fuller Victor, author of Bancroft's "History of Oregon," "Early Indian Wars of Oregon," and other works; Charles H. Carey, "History of Oregon;" Elwood Evans, "History of the Pacific Northwest;" George H. Himes and Herbert O. Lang, "History of the Willamette Valley;" Harvey K. Hines, "Illustrated History of the State of Oregon;" John Henry Brown, "Political History of Oregon;" A. G. Walling, "History of Southern Oregon," and "History of Lane County;" Joseph Gaston, "Centennial History of Oregon;" Samuel A. Clarke, "Pioneer Days of Oregon History;" Horace S. Lyman, "History of Oregon;" Joseph Schafer, C. H. Chapman, Sidona V. Johnson, J. B. Horner, authors of primer texts; Frederick V. Holman, Frederic G. Young, Harvey W. Scott, Eva Emery Dye, W. D. Fenton, George H. Himes, John Minto, Charles H. Carey, Walter Carlton Woodward, Fred Lockley and T. W. Davenport, writers on special subjects.

Many noteworthy authors are not Oregon writers, such as Robert Greenhow, perhaps the most authentic of all on the acquisition of Oregon; H. H. Bancroft, William I. Marshall, Edward Gaylord Bourne, Clinton A. Snowden, Edmund S. Meany, C. J. Brosnan, John Fiske, Hiram M. Chittenden, Lester Burrell, Hiram Shippee, Katherine B. Judson, Fred Wilbur Powell, George Wilkes, Washington Irving, Julian Hawthorne, Ross Cox, Alexander Ross, Gabriel Franchere, John Kirk Townsend, and numerous other explorers, including Lewis and Clark, Charles Wilkes, W. R. Broughton, Jonathan Carver, John Ledyard, John Meares, Robert Gray, Alexander Henry and David Thompson, Peter Skene Ogden, John Work. Then too, great masses of unused materials, other than records of explorers, have come into the hands

of non-Oregon writers, including reports of governmental agents such as Lieutenant William A. Slacum in 1836 and Lieutenant Neil M. Howison in 1846, for the United States, and Lieutenants Henry J. Warre and M. Vavasour, in 1845, for Great Britain. Some of this material is obtainable in Oregon, but great part is elsewhere, and much is yet to be made available for use. So that the present writer has finally convinced himself that the subject, "Oregon History Writers and Their Materials," should cover a wider range than the geographical limits of Oregon.

In approaching this subject, it has seemed natural to consider the "writers" and the "materials" from two viewpoints: First, for readers who seek primer or introductory knowledge, such as is afforded by the texts of Joseph Schafer, Charles H. Chapman, Sidona V. Johnson, J. B. Horner, Edmund S. Meany, and Eva Emery Dye, which were written for school uses; second, for investigators who are preparing to write upon special subjects, or upon general aspects of the history. The work of general writers necessarily must be preceded by long research on many special subjects, in order to qualify them as authentic authors. A third viewpoint, that of writers of pioneer and Indian tales, of fiction and historical romance, of Indian myths and legends, pertaining to popular literature and "easy sellers," is not included within the scope of this address; not, however, because your writer considers such works unworthy, but because of limited time afforded this afternoon. Such authors include Emerson Hough, Eva Emery Dye, Agnes Laut, Theodore Winthrop, Frederick Homer Balch, Ada Woodruff Anderson, Hezekiah Butterworth, William Lyman, Reese P. Kendall, George Palmer Putnam, George Andrew Waggoner, John H. Williams, Katherine B. Judson, Edward Legrand Sabin, Harr Wagner, Kimball Webster, Olin D. Wheeler, Cyrus T. Brady, John T. Faris. The publications of these authors represent the only renumeration

part of historical study. They are more or less imaginative, attractive to the popular taste for adventure and heroism. The literal historian lives very much to himself, with scant money return. His one source of gratification is truth for truth's sake, and the virtue of truth is his one reward. He may not expect his work to be widely read, nor eagerly bought.

Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

However, he may enjoy the thought that later generations will not be compelled to unscramble imaginative fibs from his batter of historical facts.

In surveying the bibliography of Oregon, we naturally group the authors according to subjects. Logical classifications include those of exploration and discovery, Oregon question, fur trade, Indian races and their ethnology and wars, Oregon trail and migration, pioneer records, missionaries and churches, provisional government, governmental reports, gold activities, transportation, current publications, including newspapers and magazines, botany, geology, agriculture, lumbering, etc. Writers frequently treat many of these subjects, and these need to be included in one classification. A useful book list of this kind, not too far spun out in detail, compiled by Eleanor Ruth Rockwood, Reference Librarian, Portland library, was published in the year 1923, entitled, "Books on the Pacific Northwest for Small Libraries." This list contains the book titles of some 200 authors. A more extensive "check list," as it is called by the compiler, Charles W. Smith, Associate Librarian, University of Washington Library, published in 1921, catalogs 4501 books and pamphlets under the title "Pacific Northwest Americana." An earlier list of government documents, compiled by Katherine Berry Judson and published in 1913, affords an index to a variety of subjects. Frederick Jackson Turner has compiled a list of references on history of the West

for Harvard University, published in 1922. The Portland Library uses a short list for ready reference, compiled by Miss Rockwood, and the Washington State Library has a list of public documents, 1854-1918, contained in that library, published in 1920. H. R. Wagner, of Berkeley, California, is compiler of a book list entitled "The Plains and The Rockies," being a list of works on travel and adventure.

These several lists of reference publications cover a wide range of bibliography. But they omit, necessarily, great quantities of more or less new materials. They may be said to represent what has been already harvested and passed through the grist mill of historical research. The materials of newspapers, personal manuscripts, governmental documents of the President, Congress, and the departments of State, War and Interior, opinions of State and United States courts, acts of state legislatures, monographs published in such periodicals as the *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, the *Washington Historical Quarterly*, transactions of pioneer associations of Oregon and Washington, the *Oregon Native Son*, *West Shore*, *Pacific Monthly*, and *The Oregonian*. Of all these materials, the most imposing are the records of governmental departments and Congress, the opinions of courts, and the acts of the Oregon legislature. Contemporary newspaper narratives are indispensable sources. For example, the extant copies of the "Oregon Spectator," 1846-52, the "Oregon Statesman," 1851-61, the "Oregon Argus," 1855-63, the "Oregon Weekly Times," 1850-59, the "Oregon Sentinel," 1860-70, the Olympia "Columbian" and "Pioneer and Democrat," 1852-61, are invaluable references of pioneer history, and, being contemporary with events, are accepted as authentic. We find the general histories of Victor, Bancroft and Charles H. Carey referring often to pioneer newspapers. The monumental compendium of this kind is the file of "The Oregonian," beginning in December, 1850, and continuing to the present day, complete except for a

few numbers that are lacking in the first volume in the year 1851. This file is a most complete transcript of Oregon and Pacific Northwest history. The mass of contemporary narrative and of historical review appearing in this file is exceedingly impressive. Historians and pioneers have contributed to this file. Their writings cover the subject classification mentioned earlier in this address. This collection of history was directed throughout a period of forty years by the late editor, Harvey W. Scott, who had the historian's viewpoint, and made "The Oregonian" a compendium of history, despite the daily needs of conserving space for "live news."

We find in the records and legislative acts of the Oregon provisional government and in Lafayette Grover's "Oregon Archives," many scattered details of pioneer history; likewise in the opinions of judges of Oregon territory and state and of the United States. Much of the history of the early capital controversy, which led to the segregation of Washington territory in 1853, is contained in these records. Railroad litigation has left us data in court opinions affording information about the important chapter of transportation progress. Judge Matthew P. Deady went to great pains to write history into his decisions, and we see this also true of Judge Erasmus D. Shattuck, who perhaps was the most scholarly man of our pioneer time. The codes of the Oregon legislature, especially as to special and local enactments, are rich in historical material. This same statement may be made of the United States Statutes at Large. The archives of the department of War contain a long record of Indian affairs and of the several wars with the aborigines, but relatively small part of this material is available to the investigators, because it is inadequately indexed or is buried in documentary tonnage. "Contributions to American Ethnology," 1877-93, J. W. Powell in charge, supplies valuable knowledge of the race history and languages of Oregon Country Indians, among the authors being George

Gibbs, William H. Dall and Albert Gatschet. Other scientific writers on these subjects include Horatio Hale, Albert Buell Lewis, James C. Pilling, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft.

"Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico," edited by F. W. Hodge, United States Bureau of American Ethnology, is an indispensable book of reference on tribes and their history sources. George Gibbs, Horation Hale and James C. Pilling have furnished treatises and vocabularies of the Chinook jargon, the Indians' common trade language, which have been supplemented by numerous publications and dictionaries of the jargon published by private enterprises, including those of John Gill, George C. Shaw, C. M. Tate, Walter S. Phillips, Franz Boas and Frederick J. Long. Still others who have contributed to this subject are W. F. Tolmie, Myron Eels and Modeste Demers. Reports of Indian agents and superintendents and correspondence of governmental departments, afford a voluminous yet not easily accessible record. The record of the fur trade period contains immense information about habits, customs and characteristics of the Indians. Washington Irving, in his "Astoria;" Ross Cox, Alexander Ross, Gabriel Franchere; the journals of Ogden, Work and David Thompson; James G. Swan, in his "Northwest Coast," published in 1857, give much information; also Wilkes' Narrative of 1841. The best American narrative is H. M. Chittenden's "History of American Fur Trade of the Far West." Lawrence J. Burpee's "Search for the Western Sea" is a monumental work, being a British history.

Pioneer routes and means of travel and progress of the railroad to the Pacific Coast, especially of the Union Pacific and the Northern Pacific, including Pacific Railroad Reports, diplomacy of the Oregon question in the time of John Quincy Adams, who formulated the Monroe doctrine, and in the time of Presidents Tyler and Polk—all this suggests undeveloped material in government arch-

ives. British government documents in London are yet to be exploited; Joseph Schafer has obtained Hudson's Bay Company data from that source. Monopoly claims of Spain in the North Pacific, which that nation undertook to enforce against Great Britain at Nootka in 1788, and which were assigned to the United States in the Florida treaty of 1819, suggest that there may be untouched records of exploration by the Spanish at Madrid, which were not available to the United States for the boundary negotiations of 1818-46 with Great Britain. We read that erection of a Spanish fort at Nootka in 1789 was such an affront to French claims as to precipitate the French Revolution. This was subsequent to the voyage of La Perouse in 1786-88, the narrative of which was published in 1797, and reminds us of unexplored history.

Pioneer records make up an extensive department of undigested materials. Diaries, narratives and letters are numerous. We have narratives by Jedediah S. Smith, Hall J. Kelley, Nathaniel J. Wyeth, Samuel Parker, Jason Lee, George Gary, Alvin F. Waller, P. J. de Smet, F. N. Blanchet, Ezra Fisher, Osborne Russell, Joel Palmer, Medorem Crawford, Thomas J. Farnham, J. C. Fremont, William H. Gray, Dr. Elijah White, Johnson and Winter, Lee and Frost, George H. Atkinson, Preston W. Gillette, Samuel A. Clarke, Peter H. Burnett, Jesse Applegate, James W. Nesmith, Theodore T. Geer, J. Q. Thornton, George H. Williams, John Minto, Stephen Staats, Ralph C. Geer, F. A. Chenoweth, Robert Shortess, and many others. In short, the problem presented by the materials comes from their abundance, and not from their scarcity, presenting necessities of industrious reading and difficulties of reference. The files of "The Oregonian" are replete with these materials, and, also, the publications of the Oregon Pioneer Association and the Oregon Historical Society.

More interesting as time progresses, becomes the British side of the Oregon boundary dispute, which began with the discovery of the Columbia River in 1792 and ended



in the fixing of the present boundary in 1846. On this subject American writers have desired to search the archives of the British foreign office and of the Hudson's Bay Company in London, but have made little progress. Contemporary British books setting forth the British side of the dispute were published in London, among them those of John Dunn, Thomas Falconer and Adam Thom, in 1844; Sir Travers Twiss, Charles Grenfell Nicolay, Edward James Wallace and Alexander Simpson, in 1846. The American argument is set forth best by Robert Greenhow in "History of Oregon and California," published in several editions, a book which has established itself as the first classic of this phase of Oregon history. Other contemporary books are those of Wyndham Robertson, 1846; Ephriam W. Tucker, 1844. Bearing on this subject, from the American side, are Caleb Cushing's report in Congress in 1839, Albert Gallatin's letters, speeches and letters of John C. Calhoun, President John Quincy Adams' message on the negotiations in 1826, and letters and messages of Presidents Tyler and Polk; the writings of Edward Gaylord Bourne, William D. Fenton, Joseph R. Wilson, Edmund S. Meany, Andrew Fish, T. C. Elliott, Katherine B. Judson. The future will bring to light many documents on this important subject in Washington and London.

For introductory study of Oregon history, we commend Joseph Schafer's "History of the Pacific Northwest," as the simplest, most rapid and best balanced narrative, to be followed by Charles H. Chapman's "The Story of Oregon and Its People;" Sidona V. Johnson's "A Short History of Oregon," which is a condensation of Himes and Lang's "History of Oregon;" John B. Horner's "Oregon: Her History, Her Great Men, Her Literature," and finally by a perusal of Eva Emery Dye's "Stories of Oregon." The Schafer, Chapman and Horner books are written for school uses, the authors being trained educators.

The most monumental work on Oregon history, we may

believe, is Frances Fuller Victor's "History of Oregon," of the H. H. Bancroft series. The Charles H. Carey "History of Oregon" is especially strong in the chapters of discovery, exploration and boundary negotiations, and has the merit of being more modern than the Victor-Bancroft history. Another work of high merit is Elwood Evans' "History of the Pacific Northwest." Himes and Lang's "History of the Willamette Valley" and Harvey K. Hines' "Illustrated History of the State of Oregon" are books of especial value.

Careful reading of these several works will equip the investigator with a working knowledge of the trends of Oregon history and enable him to pursue study into any chosen field. Emphasis may be laid on the need of study of original sources to qualify any writer who would perform distinctive work. The published histories can be of real service only for preliminary or introductory reading.