

# MEN AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE OREGON COUNTRY.

By Fred Lockley

[In this sketch Mr. Lockley illustrates pioneering in Portland. One of the humorous elements in the life of any big western town are the early-day guesses of its inhabitants. The present article well shows what this statement means.]

A few days ago I met Henri Labbe on the street. He said, "When you get time, come up and visit me in my new quarters in the Gasco building. Thomas N. Strong and I are together." I accepted Mr. Labbe's invitation and spent a pleasant half hour with him and Mr. Strong.

"The Labbe building was put up in 1883," said Mr. Labbe. "It cost \$90,859.58. It was one of the first four story buildings to be erected in Portland. It was the first building to have a passenger elevator in Portland. The hydraulic power was furnished by the Portland Hydraulic company, whose plant was at the foot of Oak street. The building was put up by Jack Robinson."

"I was one of the first tenants in the Labbe building," said Mr. Strong. "I stayed there 35 years. When the Labbe building was put up, at the corner of Second and Washington streets, it was believed to be a rather daring experiment to put up a business block so far away from the business portion of the city. Our firm consisted of William Strong, Fred R. Strong and myself. We bought the office fixtures of Mr. Hallock, the contractor who built part of the O. R. & N. road along the Columbia river. We were very sharply criticized by many members of the bar for moving into what was then considered luxurious quarters."

"My father came to Oregon in 1850. I was born at Cathlamet in 1853. My first playmates were the Indian boys there. In that day Cathlamet was one of the principal Indian settlements along the river. There was only one other white family near us—James Birney, factor of the Hudson Bay company. He had an Indian wife, and one of his boys, Alex Birney, was my playmate. I came to Portland in 1861. Among my Portland playmates I remember the Robertson boys, Will Ladd, Fred Holman, Ben Selling and J. M. Blossom. The principal stores in those days were on Front and First streets. Second street and Third street constituted the residence district. The principal hotel was the Arigones hotel. Later the Esmond and the St. Charles became the leading hotels. If you will look up the early history of the city you will see I was the attorney for Joseph Holladay against his brother, Ben Holladay, the transportation king of the West of that day. There was about \$3,000,000 involved. It was a most interesting case. I was admitted to the bar in 1874. Judge Shattuck, Judge Logan, Judge Page and Judge Mallory were among the leading lawyers. Judge M. P. Deady was United States district judge.

"The first trip I took from home was by canoe up the river to Portland. The motive power was an Indian crew. I

saw my first locomotive when I was 14 years old. Recently I went up to my daughter's home on Portland Heights and watched the airships as they careered over the city. When I think of it it seems wonderful, the changes that have occurred within my memory. From the old days of Birney, Roberts, Allen and other factors of the Hudson Bay company—from the days of the canoe and the batteau, ox team and pack horse—I have lived to see the advent of the automobile and the airship.

"When I was a boy an old Cathlamet Indian, Queen Sally, who, in those days, was the oldest Indian living on the lower Columbia river, pointed out to me where she had seen the canoes of Lewis and Clark land on the shores of the Columbia. An Indian runner had told the Indians to be on the watch for the white men to come from the east. She told me of her tribesmen escorting the white men to their village and of their giving a feast to the strangers. All about their village in the cottonwood trees were fastened the burial canoes of their chiefs and braves, for in those days it was the custom to place the Indian in his canoe in the branches of some high tree.

"I have seen the Oregon country, the territory won for us by the visit of Lewis and Clark, become the birthplace and cradle of the highest type of western civilization. I have seen Portland grow from a village to one of the world's important ports and a commercial metropolis of the West."

For 66 years Mr. Strong has looked upward each day to the vast white bulk of Mount Hood. He has studied it in all its varying moods and phases till he has come to look on it as a friend and comrade. Boyhood friends change or go to a far country. The associates of his early manhood are scattered and gone, but Mount Hood remains, changeless and serene through the changeful years. Majestic Mount Hood and the peaceful and beauty-haunted Willamette have become a very part of his life. One can not look out upon majesty and beauty through the winging years without feeling their influence and being better for it. Ella Higginson has interpreted the feeling of those of us who love the snow clad mountain peaks, the evergreen clad hills, the fertile valleys and the green bordered rivers and streams of the West, in these lines:

The sun sinks downward through the silver mist,  
That looms across the valley fold on fold,  
And sliding through the fields that dawn has  
kissed,

Willamette sweeps, a chain of liquid gold,  
Trails onward ever, curving as it goes,  
Past many a hill and many a flowered lee,  
Until it pauses where Columbia flows,  
Deep tongued, deep bosomed, to the waiting  
sea.

The sun sinks downward through the trembling  
haze,  
The mist flings glistening needles high and  
higher,  
And through the clouds—Oh, fair beyond all  
praise!—  
Mount Hood leaps chastened from a sea of  
fire.

they only taxed fine shoes over \$10. I

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