

EASTWARD EXPANSION OF POPULATION FROM THE PACIFIC SLOPE

Those who have read Theodore Roosevelt's interesting work on the Winning of the West will remember how graphically he tells the story of the early pioneers of the Allegheny Mountains and their brave fight with the western forests as they by incessant toil and daring hardihood carved homes out of that vast land in the Ohio valley. His history begins with the passing of a few rough frontiersmen like Daniel Boone and his associates from the settlements in the highlands of western Virginia over into Kentucky and Tennessee. The first movers were hunters and trappers whose game haunts had been destroyed by the farmers and villagers; who in turn followed them across the Alleghenies. They were looking for new and untouched grounds where the feet of white men had never trodden. This western movement began as early as 1755, while we were still colonies of England, and it is going on at this day, only very much more rapidly than ever before. It required twenty-five years to fill Kentucky with fifty thousand white people; in the past ten years twenty-four hundred thousand people have settled in the Rocky Mountain States, while Oklahoma's population grew from nothing in 1889 to sixteen hundred thousand twenty-one years later.

Many writers before and since Mr. Roosevelt have pointed out that the spreading out of our people over the *Mississippi Valley* has been by a gradual process of filling up one section and then a few movers drifting over into the adjoining section where the land was unoccupied. From the first English settlement at Jamestown in 1607 the settlement of the country went on steadily by the gradual moving of the frontier farther and farther westward. At no time were the new clearings far from the older villages. The country was populated much as the water creeps up a string or cloth by capillary attraction. Thus the westernmost line of settlement stretched along the Appalachian Mountains in 1750; along the Mississippi River by 1840; along the 100th Meridian by 1890.

The 100th meridian is the line of longitude running north and south, passing through the center of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas and separating Oklahoma from the Panhandle of Texas. West of this line the amount of rainfall in ordinary years is not sufficient for farming purposes by the old methods, and consequently the country is considered best adapted to grazing. East of this meridian and extending to the Atlantic Ocean plenty of rain and fertile soil make the country fairly uniform,

both in the industries pursued and in the density of population. The 100th meridian may, therefore, be considered as a frontier line reached by the flow of people some twenty years ago. Many writers seem to think that since reaching this line dividing the region of plenty of rain from the semi-arid region, the process of settlement has been entirely different. It seems to me, however, to be practically the same, except that not all the country can be settled now; only the fertile valleys where irrigation can be used or where the pasturage can be fenced and water obtained from streams or from wells. Dry farming may, however, make all the land available for agriculture. Political economists have said that Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho and Utah can never be so thickly settled as Iowa and Kentucky. But the contrary is being proven year by year as these great states are filling up. Just as in the early days the farmers followed close on the heels of the hunters and trappers, so now are they following close behind the miners and cattle men.

Moreover, the process is going on just as rapidly as it ever did. In the twenty years from 1890 to 1910 Montana gained in population over 200,000, Colorado nearly 400,000, Wyoming 100,000, Utah 200,000, and the territory of New Mexico about 160,000. Besides, during this time people have spread beyond these frontier states on out into Idaho, Nevada and Arizona. In spite, however, of these Rocky Mountain states being filled up, there is still a region of sparse population lying between the 100th Meridian and the Coast Ranges of Mountains called the Great Plateau Region, which comprises all the states of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah and Idaho, together with the Eastern part of California, Oregon and Washington.

I wish now to call attention to another process of settlement which was going on at the same time as the gradual spreading westward just described. This other method may be truly called the *colonial* process, as the movers left their former homes and traveled over a vast distance of unpopulated country and founded colonies far removed from older settlements. This colonization reached its high water mark in 1849, when thousands of Americans left the thickly inhabited states of the East, passed over the uninhabited Great Plateau, and settled in the Coastal region of California, there at first to search for gold and minerals, but later to till the soil and build permanent homes. This colony was already quite large and populous back in the time when the frontier line ran along through the center of the first tier of states west of the Mississippi. So far indeed was it from the home states that the people of the East did not see how it could be held in the Union. A large part of the transportation of material and colonists was by way of the Isthmus of Panama. The building of railroads clear through to the Coast afforded an easier and quicker

means of transportation from the East and made it still easier for the Pacific slope to become settled before the intervening space of the Great Plateau.

At about the same time the Willamette Valley and Puget Sound became the seat of a colony of Americans who crossed the Plateau and settled on the Coast. Seattle and Tacoma grew up to be quite respectable cities from the shipping and fishing done on the Pacific. Had nothing unusual happened, or if the Sound slope had not had other resources, it is probable that these cities would have with difficulty recovered from the hard times of the nineties. Nor would they have grown to any considerable extent until the Plateau country should be well filled up and the Panama canal be completed. The building of the Northern Pacific railway to the Sound made it possible for people to come to the Coast, but the agricultural attractions offered would not have brought very great numbers to raise grain so far from a market.

But in the year 1897 the discovery of gold in Alaska did for the Washington coastal region what the gold discoveries of 1848 had done for California. Thousands of prospectors from all parts of our country and Europe flocked to Seattle to take ship for the Klondike. The fitting out took place here, shipping grew up in a few months to large dimensions, successful miners returned to settle here, where they could watch their interests in the North; many men who had intended going to Alaska lost heart on reaching Puget Sound and stayed right here. Many found it more profitable to outfit the miners than to mine themselves. It is probable that Seattle added fifty thousand people to her population between 1897 and 1900. (I make this statement in the face of the fact that it increased only forty thousand between 1890 and 1900. My explanation is that between 1890 and 1897 Seattle had decreased from a population of 40,000 in 1890 to not more than 30,000 in 1897. I believe this from statements of old settlers who lived here during the entire period, and from a careful comparison with decreases in coastal cities and towns not affected by the gold rush to the Klondike.)

Just as the invigorated commerce brought people to Seattle doubling its population, so did Tacoma revive from her lethargy, so did Everett spring into existence like Minerva from the cleft head of Jupiter, and so awoke Bellingham and Ballard. The rush to the coast stimulated another industry which, in turn, attracted its hundreds of thousands. Lumber and shingle mills sprang up along the Coast, on the lakes and rivers, close to the railroads. Spurs were thrown out from the main lines to tap the richly forested districts of the valleys and foothills, until the entire Pacific slope of the Cascades rang with the sound of the ax, the whistle of the donkey engine and the steady singing of the myriad saws of a thousand busy mills.

So Puget Sound trebled its population between 1900 and 1907, and every visitor began to tell us that the country was becoming over-populated.

But already a new movement had begun. Population flows from the densely settled metropolis to the sparsely settled colony, and heretofore the metropolis or mother country had been in the Eastern part of the United States and the movement had been westward. Now, by the settlement described, the Pacific Coastal region had become the comparatively densely settled metropolis, but the ocean prevented a very large movement westward; so the flow of population turned backward toward the East, into that sparsely settled region lying between the Cascades and the Sierra Nevada Mountains on the West and the 100th Meridian on the East. I propose to exclude from discussion the part California has played in the peopling of the states to the East of her and south of the southern boundary of Oregon. I shall deal with the part the Pacific Coast west of the Cascades has played in the peopling of Eastern Washington, principally, but, incidentally, Eastern Oregon, Idaho and Western Montana. While this does not take us eastward as far as the 100th Meridian, it does take us to the crest of the main ridge of the Rocky Mountains. This gives a sufficiently large field to cover in one paper.

There have been two periods in which Eastern Washington has received a large influx of population from the Pacific Coast countries—the first, the early period before 1870; and the second, the period since 1905. Between 1870 and 1905 there seems to have been no particular flow of people eastward in this state, at least not much greater than the westward movement from Eastern Washington.

A few settlers from across the 100th Meridian had settled in Eastern Washington as early as 1836, missionaries, fur traders, and others. With these we have nothing to do here, for the Whitman massacre of 1847 and the Cayuse Indian War killed off a great many of these, and the rest were ordered to leave by the military officer in charge of the region. By 1850 the region was completely depopulated of white people, and remained so until 1858.*

In this last mentioned year General Clarke rescinded General Wool's order excluding settlers from the country east of the Cascades, and the region began to be peopled. The first settlers came from down the Columbia River, from the settlement west of the Cascades, beginning a movement that was to go on for twelve years uninterruptedly. In fact, the seven thousand people found in Eastern Washington by the census of 1870 practically all came from the Pacific Coast. The Civil War was attracting the attention of the people in the Mississippi Valley, and the westward movement did

*Snowden, IV., page 73.

not begin until that struggle ended. In 1858, at the time when the eastward movement began, there were nine thousand settlers in Washington Territory, west of the Cascades, and in Western Oregon fifty-two thousand. There now began a steady movement up the Columbia River into what are now Klickitat, Benton and Walla Walla counties. Farming in the valleys was carried on, and a few small villages were founded, notably Walla Walla and Touchet. Gold was found at this time first in the Nez Perce Indian country of middle Idaho and later in the Kootenai district of Northern Washington and Idaho. A great stream of migrators from the Pacific counties of Washington, Oregon and California went up the Columbia, provisioned at Walla Walla and scattered out through the mountains. By 1860 Walla Walla had a population of 704, of whom 552 were men; Touchet had 158, of whom only 45 were women; Dry Creek had 80 people. These were all in the southwestern part of the territory near the Columbia. There was a mining population of 501 in the Colville Valley, 82 in the Bitter Root Valley, and 91 men scattered through the Ponderay Mountains (Pende O'Reille). There were nine white people on the Yakima Indian Reservation.

From 1860 on, the gold rush continued with increased volume, but came almost exclusively from the West, some even from the settlement at the mouth of the Fraser River in Western British Columbia. By 1870 there were nearly seven thousand settlers in Eastern Washington, while in Idaho there were fifteen thousand, of whom over four thousand were Chinese, and in the mountains of Montana about fifteen thousand more. Eastern Oregon had risen from nothing to 13,000. Authorities cited by Snowden in his history of Washington estimate that twenty-five thousand people went up the Columbia River from the West in one year. A good part of these came from California. But when all deductions are made, the Pacific counties of Washington and Oregon contributed a very large share of the settlers in Eastern Washington and Oregon, Idaho and Western Montana.

Beginning with 1870, and gaining in volume rapidly after the Northern Pacific reached Eastern Washington, the flow of people from East of the 100th Meridian must have swamped the early settlers originating on this side of the Cascades. Indeed the next twenty-three years formed a period of great activity in Western Washington, and it is not likely that many people left for east of the mountains. From 1893 to 1897 occurred the period of greatest business depression in our history. Old settlers have informed me that in their opinion thousands of settlers left Western Washington for their old homes in the East. Eastern Washington, having become a farming section, did not suffer so intensely, and consequently did not lose population. I have been able to find no specific evidence that many Pacific

Coast people settled in the Inland Empire country during that period of depression. But the fact that that region gained 58 per cent in population in the decade from 1890 to 1900 without any boom, and that Western Washington gained in the decade only 42 per cent with the Alaska boom and the boom following the building of the Great Northern to the Sound, would tend to indicate that, if there were any infra-state movement at all, it was from the Pacific counties to the inland counties.

From 1897 to 1907 the region West of the Cascades enjoyed an era of exceptional prosperity. During that time the Alaska trade assumed gigantic proportions; the lumber industry attracted thousands from the regions of depleted forests in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota; the Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound Railroad was projected and millions in money were poured into the Puget Sound country for development. These three causes combined to stimulate speculation on a recklessly dangerous scale, which in turn precipitated the boom of 1906. The financial panic of 1907, which was nation-wide, bore down more heavily on us, as it had caught us at the top of a boom.

Taking advantage of the great prosperity and reckless speculation rife in Seattle and other Coast cities, Eastern Washington promoters established agencies here in 1905 and 1906 and did a large business. I have talked with several men who bought irrigated land at that time. At first this was largely speculating on the part of the people, but after the crash of 1907 many found it the part of wisdom to move out onto their fruit lands.

In preparing this paper I was unable to find any published material bearing on the period, 1905-1912. I was, therefore, compelled to get my information by letter or by interview. I sent out two hundred letters to mayors, school superintendents and principals, and private citizens, asking for data on the number of people from Western Washington living in their communities. To most of these inquiries I received no answer whatever. Others answered carelessly and at random. A few gave me reliable information. I supplement these data by inquiries among a great many trustworthy real estate firms in Seattle. I interviewed over a hundred men in Seattle, Wenatchee, Ephrata, Spokane, North Yakima and Pasco. What I have written here should be supplemented by investigators working in each community.

As mining was the attraction which lured Westerners eastward in the early period before 1870, so fruitgrowing has been the lure of the period from 1905 on. There are a large number of these projects. I found that the Wenatchee district was especially full of Westerners. At Columbia River station there are twenty-five families settled in one community. This does not form a majority of the people, however, for there are more people from Wenatchee alone than that. But this is a good exam-

ple of Western Washington settlements. Leavenworth contains an even dozen families from this side, 15 per cent of Cashmere's people hail from this side. Wenatchee itself, according to its Chamber of Commerce, has only 350 people from Western Washington, but I believe this estimate is considerably below the real numbers.

Ellensburg has about a hundred families from Western Washington, and North Yakima has many business men from this side. The Knob Hill school district, just outside the city limits of North Yakima, received 20 per cent of its people from the Pacific Coast counties. Atanum, six miles from North Yakima, was founded and is entirely populated by Seattle people.

Another district filled with Westerners is that of which Pasco is the center. Pasco itself has 200 families from Western Washington and Oregon. Prosser has 25 families, and Byron has six families from the Puget Sound country. Burbank is a Seattle settlement, and so also is Hanford. Kennewick has 200 Coast people.

Turning to the north, the Ephrata district is quite largely Western in settlement. One hundred families have gone from Seattle to settle around Adrian in the past three years. The Moses Lake and Moses coulee districts are largely Western owned and will be settled upon in the near future. I personally know eight men who own land in this district and are intending to make it their home as soon as their orchards are bearing. The town of Ephrata, in the center, was settled from Seattle, its lawyers, doctors, bankers, real estate agents and merchants coming from this side of the Cascades.

Arcadia Irrigated Tract, containing 20,000 acres, a few miles north of Spokane, has its quota of Puget Sound people. Thirty-five families from Seattle have elected to make that district their home. A few miles north of the Arcadia Orchard Tract, in the timber belt, several families settled two or three years ago. One Green Lake lumber man with his two sons and families located there last spring.

The Des Chutes river valley in Eastern Oregon has gotten a large number of immigrants from West of the Cascades. Most of these have gone from Portland, but Tacoma has contributed also. The railroad circulars state that a thousand families from West of the Cascades have settled in the valley in the past two years. The Georgetown Gazette News contained a news item to the effect that twenty of her citizens are now at Bend, Oregon. Mrs. M. J. Wall accompanied fourteen families from West Seattle who settled on Carey Act and other irrigated land near Bend.

Though there are other towns with a few Western Washington people in them, I found that these irrigated land communities are by far the most important. I shall pass over the isolated examples of wheat farmers,

the dozen or fewer families in Colfax, Ritzville, Susanville, Oregon, and Moulson, Wash., and note that some 150 Western families got claims in the opening of the Cœur d'Alene Indian Reservation and many families are living on their claims. According to a letter from Mr. Frank Robertson, who got a desirable claim, there are a hundred of such families in and near Plummer, Idaho.

I think it must appear evident from the above facts and figures gathered from most reliable sources that the past five years have seen at least ten thousand people move eastward from West of the Cascades. My report must be very incomplete, and the census figures do not help out very much. The census figures for 1910 on birthplace are not yet available, and even when they are available they will not show in what part of a state the people of Eastern Washington and Idaho are born. For example, the 1900 census shows 9100 persons in Idaho who were born in Oregon and Washington, but does not indicate whether West of the Cascades or East. The same census showed two thousand in Montana born in Oregon and Washington. This shows a considerable eastward movement, but those *born* in the West going east must be only a small proportion of those who go east after having *secured* a residence in the West.

The arrivals at the railroad stations in Spokane and Seattle indicate a much larger number coming direct to the Coast from East of the 100th Meridian than to Spokane. This only shows what the other points mentioned have proven, that people come from the East both by rail and by boat intending to locate here, and that using this as a base thousands yearly spread out into Eastern Washington, Eastern Oregon, Idaho and even Montana.

That this movement is only a part of a general movement of the people round about is clearly disproved by the fact that Seattle contains very few people born in Eastern Washington, or even of persons who had established a residence there. Out of 150 pupils, taken at random at the Lincoln High School, Seattle, only three had ever lived in Eastern Washington. I consider this a good proof of the fact that there has been little or no flow of people from Eastern into Western Washington. Lincoln High School gets her pupils from the University, Green Lake and Fremont districts. These have all grown up in the past ten years; that is, they contain a population that is new to the Coast. In fact only twenty of the 150 pupils quizzed had been born here. The great majority—130 out of 150—were immigrants from other parts of the country. Yet only three came from Eastern Washington. The conclusion is indisputable. The movement of population from Eastern to Western Washington is merely that of a readjusting of settlers, the natural come and go common

to American life. The movement eastward, which even in the case of Wenatchee is large enough to give her population ten per cent of Coast people, is a very different migration.

In conclusion, the evidence deduced points to a still further emigration from the Coast in the future. This does not mean that the Coast is to lose in the total of her population. The information I secured concerning the excess of arrivals over departures shows that Seattle gets the bulk of the immigrants to Washington from the Eastern states. The Coast countries receive the immigrants direct from the East, and at the same time constantly give off a steady stream of settlers for Eastern Washington, Eastern Oregon and even Idaho. With the opening of the Panama Canal these movements will, no doubt, increase in intensity.

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