

## PACIFIC NORTHWEST AMERICANA

### *Historical Literature in the Small Libraries*

In order to stimulate interest in the subject of local history in the small libraries of the State of Washington, Mr. J. M. Hitt, State Librarian, has carried out a novel and interesting expedient. According to his plan two copies of the Checklist of *Pacific Northwest Americana* have been circulated simultaneously among the small libraries of the State. Each library has checked the volume by affixing its registration number opposite the titles which it possesses. This census of twenty-seven libraries is now complete and it is possible by referring to these checked volumes to gain a very definite knowledge of the extent to which the smaller libraries of this State are stocking the books that deal with its history.

As might well be expected the really rare books are almost wholly lacking. Of the standard titles of comparative accessibility, however, there is an appalling scarcity of items of high authority and greatest usefulness. Only five libraries out of the twenty-seven report any considerable number of the works of Hubert Howe Bancroft and but four have his *History of Washington*. Not a single library has Greenhow's *History of Oregon and California*, nor is Chittenden's *American Fur Trade* nor any volume of DeSmet represented. Only three libraries report volumes by Frances Fuller Victor and none of them have *The River of the West*. Of the early voyagers to the Northwest Coast, James Cook is represented in three libraries and George Vancouver in but one in a complete edition. Nine libraries have Meany's *Vancouver's Discovery of Puget Sound*. Two libraries have Swan's *Northwest Coast* but none of them contain Wilkes' *Exploring Expedition*. Irving's *Astoria* is plentiful but of the other parallel accounts Franchere and Ross are found in but one library in the Thwaites reprint and Alexander Ross not at all.

Of all the books reported, the great majority are works of fiction. Some of the more popular are the following titles:

Anderson, *Heart of the Red Firs*, reported 21 times.

Anderson, *Rim of the Desert*, 23 times.

Anderson, *Strain of White*, 18 times.

Dye, *The Conquest*, 15 times.

Dye, *McLoughlin and Old Oregon*, 18 times.

Balch, *Bridge of the Gods*, 23 times.

Beach, *Silver Horde*, 23 times.

Beach, *The Spoilers*, 25 times.

It is not surprising to learn of the large number of novels as compared with the fewer number of works written from the distinctly historical point of view. One cannot escape the conviction, however, that there is need for better selection of these works of imaginative literature. Why should Balch's *Bridge of the Gods* be found in twenty-three libraries when Winthrop's *Canoe and the Saddle* is to be found in but eight and Cooper's *Yamhills* in none? Such a guide as Miss Rookwood's *Books on the Pacific Northwest for Small Libraries* should be utilized in every small library in the State.

An examination of Mr. Hitt's returns is not without encouragement. It shows that dependable histories such as Schafer's *History of the Pacific Northwest* and Meany's *History of Washington* are to be found in a majority of the libraries of the State while not a single library has reported a copy of Barrow's *Oregon*, once prevalent.

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#### Stearn's "Guide"

In the October installment of this department, attention was called to a rare pamphlet entitled *Harrison's Guide and Resources of the Pacific Slope* (San Francisco, 1872). Another book in this class has just been acquired by the University of Washington Library. It is entitled *The Official Gazette and Travelers' and Immigrants' Guide to Oregon and Washington Territory*, by D. H. Stearns. It contains 192 pages and cover and bears the imprint of Portland: Geo. H. Himes' Steam Printing Establishment, 1877. A copy of this item is to be found in the public library of Portland as shown by the *Checklist*, No. 3827. A comparison of the two copies shows that each was printed by G. H. Himes for the Compiler and Publisher in 1877. Each copy, however, bears upon the wrapper the legend "Portland, Oregon, October 1, 1876". The volume gives much valuable information including state and county officers, lists of post offices, leading business names, newspapers, stage routes, etc. Like most other guidebooks written to attract Eastern immigrants, it contains a glowing account of the beauties and possibilities of the Northwest.