

DOCUMENTS

Business Broadside of 1853

Captain William Webster has received almost no attention in the published histories of the Territory and State of Washington. Hurbert Howe Bancroft, in his *History of Washington, Idaho and Montana*, simply mentions, in a footnote on page 20, that he was among others who settled at Port Townsend in 1851. Other histories are singularly silent as to the man or his work.

Washington was set aside from Oregon and organized as a Territory under the act of Congress of March 2, 1853. The broadside here reproduced bears no date but on the back was written for filing: "Circular Capt. Webster Olympia 1853." Olympia had the only printing plant north of the Columbia River at that time. The enterprising Captain gives some information about his former activities in New Zealand and speaks of the new Territory of Washington. It is therefore clear that this is one of the first (if not the very first) attempts to inform the world in a business way about the resources of the Puget Sound region.

Mr. Hamilton Platt of Seattle secured the old original broadside from Mr. C. G. Campbell of Port Townsend. Mr. Platt has for many years maintained an interest in the history of the Pacific Northwest. He has presented to the University of Washington Library many valuable manuscripts, newspapers and pamphlets. He now presents this interesting old document for preservation and for reproduction in the *Washington Historical Quarterly*. No effort will be made to reproduce the large display type but the contents are given in full and with spellings as in the original.—EDITOR.

To
MERCHANTS, SHIP-OWNERS
AND SHIP-MASTERS,
IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD

THE undersigned takes this mode of acquainting all persons who are interested in mercantile operations, that the new TERRITORY OF WASHINGTON, which was divided from Oregon Territory, by Act of Congress, in 1853, is now becoming a place of note, and will, in a few years, be one of the most important possessions of the United States, on the Pacific, for the following reasons, viz.:—

Look at the coast chart, from the southernmost boundary, where the United States joins Mexico, to the northernmost boundary, where it joins the British Possessions.—You will see it extends from about the latitude 32° to latitude 48° North, having a coast front of about 1000 miles,—and there is no Port or Harbor from San Francisco to the North boundary, (except several open Bays and bar Harbors, and the Columbia River,) a distance of about eight hundred miles. It must therefore be evident to every thinking man of the world, that the time is not far distant when a Rail-Road will be built across the continent of America; and to look at the geographical and NATIONAL point of view, it must be plainly seen that, if the main road does not terminate at Puget Sound, *a branch road will*. Then again: Look at the beautiful navigation, the entrance to which is between Cape Classet and Vancouver's Island, then runs up the Straits of San Juan de Fuca eighty miles, and the average width of about fifteen miles, the centre of which is the boundary line between Great Britain and the United States. The boundary then runs around the eastern point of Vancouver's Island, and up the Canal de Aro, to the parallel of 49° North latitude, leaving on the right hand, or southern and eastern side, the whole of Admiralty Inlet, Puget Sound, and a number of Islands belonging to Washington Territory. From the entrance of said Straits of De Fuca to the entrance of Admiralty Inlet, is about ninety miles; and from there to the head of Puget Sound, is about 120 miles, and varies from one half a mile to five miles in width,—with its hundreds of Bays, Inlets, and Rivers,—and forms the most beautiful inland navigation in the known world, and has depth of water for the largest ships to navigate.

Every River and Bay and Inlet abounds in salmon of the best quality, and a great many thousand barrels may be cured yearly: also codfish, herrings, halibut, and different other sorts of fish, in abundance; clams, of all sizes, in immense quantities and of excellent quality. Oysters plentiful, but small.

Nearly the whole of the banks of this immense inland navigation are covered with timber, consisting mostly of fir and cedar—the former equal to any known, in quality, for ships' spars, and far exceed, in length and beauty, any yet discovered in any part of the world. Cedar is a good substitute for white pine, and is useful for house and boat building, &c., &c. There are now about 7000 white inhabitants in the Territory, many of whom have commenced the lumbering and fishing business; and I know of no part of the world where there is so good a field for enterprising men, at the present

time, as Washington Territory. The climate is very healthy, and eight months of the year the weather is very pleasant. The snow lies on the ground, for a few days at a time, during the months of December and January; but the farmers do not lay in fodder for their stock, except their working cattle.

The Indians are numerous, and generally harmless. They are useful for fishing, and boats' crews, and many other purposes. Coal beds have been discovered in many places, sufficient to supply the whole Pacific. It lies there for those who have the means and enterprise to remove it to where it was intended to go.

At the entrance of the Straits De Fuca, and on the large fishing banks that lie off from ten to thirty miles from the coast, there are great quantities of whales. The Indians take from two to three thousand barrels of oil per annum, in their rude way, and they dispose of the greater part of it to the traders, in exchange for clothing, &c. They also catch great quantities of cod and halibut on the different banks. If vessels and boats were fitted out as they are in the East, great profits would be the result.

Any number of cargoes of spars can be obtained, at short notice, in Puget Sound, at prices, the list of which is hereunto annexed,—and all vessels coming for cargoes can rely on getting them on the terms hereafter mentioned, and probably less.

I have ordered a large number of copies of this statement printed in the form of Circulars, and will forward them to the Eastern States and Europe; and as I am well acquainted with the markets in the following named countries and places, (having been traveling amongst them for upwards of twenty years,) I shall send a large number of these Circulars to the different Consuls and Agents in the East Indies and China, and to the many different ports in New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land, New Zealand, the Society and Sandwich Islands, and all the principal ports on this coast, from San Francisco to Valparaiso. I am aware that at the most of these places they require our produce, and I here acquaint them with these facts, and on what terms they can be supplied. I have had also a large number of copies of Commodore Wilkes', (of the United States Exploring Expedition,) and other navigators' Charts of Puget Sound, lithographed by B. F. Butler, of this place, and forward them, with these Circulars, to all the principal ports aforesaid. The Charts are on a large scale, and *correct*. I have made arrangements to supply any number of cargoes. I am established at Port Townsend, at the entrance of the great inland waters of Puget Sound. The

harbor is good, and easy of access. The Government are about erecting the Custom-House there, and it is now a port of entry. The winds prevail on the coast, from the month of April to October, from the north-west, and for the remainder of the 12 months from south-west to south-east. The wind blows hard from the eastward at times, in the winter, sometimes so that ships cannot carry sail to beat into the Straits of San Juan De Fuca. Vessels bound in, in winter months, should, when near the entrance and the weather easterly looking, get into Neeaha Bay, at Cape Classet, and anchor until the breeze is over. (See Chart.) The anchorage is good.

No doubt this will be read by hundreds of my old acquaintances in the before-mentioned countries and places,—and as there were others of the same name in New Zealand, I will state, that the undersigned is the same who resided near where the city of Auckland now is, several years before the British took possession, and who had the whaling stations, timber stations, and contract for spars for the British navy, &c., &c., and hope no further reference is required (by all who know me) for the correctness of this statement.

WM. WEBSTER,
NOW OF PORT TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON TERRITORY.

PRICE OF SPARS AND PRODUCE

in

PUGET SOUND, WASHINGTON TERRITORY

SPARS, for Studding-Sail and other Booms,3 cents per foot.
 “ from 12 to 20 inches, proper lengths for Yards
 and Top-Masts,5 to 12 cents per foot.
 “ for piling, from 40 to 80 feet long,5 to 7 cents per foot.
 TIMBER, 12 inches square, for Caps and Stringers for same,
 and from 40 to 80 feet long, from . .12 to 16 cents per foot.
 The COAL has no established price, as yet.
 MASTS, from 20 to 24 inches,25 cents per running foot.
 “ “ 25 to 30 “25 to 75 cents per foot.
 “ “ 30 to 40 “ 80 to 120 feet
 long,75 to \$1.25 per foot.
 The Spars good quality, and delivered afloat, near the ship,
 in an excellent harbor.
 SAWED LUMBER, for House and Ship building,
 at from \$14 to \$22 per 1000 feet.

SALMON, from.....\$6 to \$8 per barrel of 200lb.

SMOKED SALMON, at about.....10 cents per lb.

Other sorts of Fish, at about the same rates.

WM. WEBSTER.