

## NEWS DEPARTMENT

### *Old Oregon Letters*

Miss Margaret Jean Bostwick, a student in the University of Washington, has in her custody a family heirloom in the form of a sheaf of pioneer Oregon letters ranging in dates from 1856 to 1863. Most of them were written by James Murray to his sons and nephews.

In the first of these letters dated "Long Tom, near Stars Point, Benton County, O.T., Dec. 18th, 1856," he tells a nephew about first settling in "Grand Rond Valley on the headwaters of the South Branch of Yamhill river in Polk County. The Indian agents selected that valley for a reserve and bought all the white inhabitants out and moved the indians in and are teaching those of them that will work to cultivate the land, but the labour has generally to be done by white men though I saw two breaking ploughs and teams that was altogether managed by indians."

He also told about his two sons having gone to Yreka, California, where they "are getting four dollars apiece per day by paying their own board which will be about 75 cents apiece per day."

Aside from the personal items, of interest mainly to members of the family, the letters give information about fencing new lands, caring for cattle and fields, necessary and common experiences of all pioneers.

One of the nephews of James Murray was John Murray who became the first Treasurer of Pierce County after Washington became a State. Camp Murray of Fort Lewis traces its name to the same family because of the homestead there.

The longest letter in the sheaf is from John Murray at Yreka, California, to William T. Hinkley then at Rice Ford, Minnesota. The letter in three parts is dated December, 1863. Mr. Hinkley was the husband of Margaret Murray, whose granddaughter, Mrs. Draper, now owns the letters. This longest letter to Mr. Hinkley gives much information about members, relatives and acquaintances of the Murray family as well as news of that day about the mines. He says the gulches on the Yreka Flats had been worked over three or four times but the Chinese had bought up the claims and were satisfied if they could make one or two dollars a day from them. He says: "There are over 60,000 Chinese in California and more coming all the time and, unless something is done to prevent it, they

will eventually own all the mining ground in the state." He tells of rich silver mines in Nevada where a convention was being held to prepare for Statehood. One of the best places he knew for miners just then was "Idaho Territory," mentioning Boise River, as well as John Day, Powder, Salmon and Snake River diggings. In speaking of these he says: "Some of the claims there pay 60 to \$100 per day to the hand and those that pay less than \$7.00 per day are not worked as wages are 6 & \$8.00 per day. One emigrant crossed the plains last year. Got to Boise just as the mines were found, went there & got a good claim, worked it till about July or August, then sold out and went home with \$60,000." The news also mentioned some who went broke.

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*Special Edition of Jewitt's Narrative*

John Graham, well known architect of Seattle, has made "several copies" of *John R. Jewitt's Narrative* from one of the earliest editions. It is five and a half by eight and a half inches, neatly bound in stiff paper, bearing a full printed title. The text is typewritten, each single-spaced page having a type coverage of three and one-half by six and one-half inches. With this unusual form of reproduction it is a surprise to find that the total of pages is 169, almost exactly that of the original, 166 pages.

Mr. Graham when explaining that he thought the original he had borrowed was dated in 1808, kindly added with Christmas cheer: "Knowing your interest in Nootka, I should like you to have one of these copies with my kindest regards."

Mr. Graham has a fine yacht, which explains his own interest in Nootka and other historic regions of the North Pacific Coast.

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*Geographic Names Decisions*

Since the last issue of this *Quarterly*, the United States Geographic Board has rendered a number of decisions of particular interest in the State of Washington.

At the meeting of October 1, 1930, an Olympic Mountain in Grays Harbor County received official sanction for the name Colonel Bob. It is at the head of Bunch Canyon, Olympic National Forest. In June of 1930, a cairn was found on its summit containing the record left there on July 24, 1893, stating that J. N. and Robert Locke and Clark Pealer had on that day christened the peak in honor of Robert G. Ingersoll (1833-1899) celebrated lawyer and lecturer. The peak has an elevation of 4,500 feet.