

Washington Territory Hailed as “The Pennsylvania of the West”

Washington State Library
Office of the Secretary of State
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The Washington State Library recently acquired a territorial brochure that is packed with information intended to entice settlers to the area via the Northern Pacific Railroad. The brochure folds out to a full-page map on the inside, but the tidbits of information on the outside are what capture the reader. Yale is the only other library listed as owning this item according to the worldwide OCLC online catalog.

All about Washington Territory: The Pennsylvania of the West. Rand McNally & Co Printers, and Engravers, 1888? 1 sheet folded.
RARE V 979.703 ALL ABO 1888?

The introductory paragraph of this small brochure states:

The completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad, spanning the northwestern portion of the United States between the headwaters of the Mississippi and the most westerly of the Great Lakes and Puget Sound, has developed in Washington Territory a region of such illimitable wealth of soil, iron, coal, and lumber, as fairly entitles it to the name of the “Pennsylvania of the West.”

After profiling the Territory’s location, physical features, water courses, mountains and climate, wheat raising and hop culture are discussed under the heading “Agricultural Productions.” The growing of fruits and vegetables, stock raising, dairying, and logging and lumbering industries each have their own section. Under “The Shipping of Puget Sound,” it tells *the largest cargo in wheat was shipped on November 20, 1888, in the British ship “Lord Raglan” Two vessels carried each 2,000,000 feet of lumber, bound for Melbourne, Australia.* The brochure notes that 37 sailing vessels, 97 steamers, 20 barques, and 11 schooners for a total of 165 vessels, with a total tonnage of about 109,000, that make regular trips to Puget Sound annually

In the “Fisheries” section it states *It is impossible to secure accurate data relating to the salmon-packing industry Codfish averaging two and one-half feet in length, and with a girth around the shoulders of eighteen inches, are taken in the Sound*

Highlighted in the “Minerals and Mining” section are:

Gold and Silver—*On both slopes of the Cascades men have been mining uninterruptedly for gold for fifteen years*

Coal and Coke—*There are two coking plants, one operated by the Tacoma Coal & Coking Company, and the other by the Wilkeson Coal & Coking Company.*

Iron—*The only iron yet marketed is from bog ore in Jefferson county.*

The brochure has a small table of daily wages for occupations such as carpenters, tinsmiths, stone and marble cutters, coal miners, bricklayers, and tailors. A special breakdown for loggers follows, listing the monthly wages for teamsters, choppers, skidders and hook tenders, swampers, sawyers, common laborers, boys, and cooks.

Three cities have paragraphs devoted to them: Tacoma, Seattle, and Spokane Falls. It lists other towns with their populations as of 1888 such as: Colfax (2,500), Dayton (3,000), Ellensburg (3,000), Port Townsend (4,200), North Yakima (2,000), Olympia (3,000), Walla Walla (5,800), and Whatcom (7,000).

Two panels of the brochure talk about the Northern Pacific Railroad including the land it has for sale in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. It touts their railroad *is the shortest route from St. Paul to Tacoma by 207 miles, to Seattle by 177 miles, and to Portland by 324 miles [It] is the only line running through passenger cars of any description from St. Paul or Minneapolis into Idaho, Oregon, or Washington. . . . A ten days' stop-over privilege is given on Northern Pacific second-class Northern Pacific coast tickets at Spokane Falls and all points west, thus affording the intending settler an excellent opportunity to see the entire country without incurring the expense of paying local fares from point to point.*

In addition to the full-page fold-out map, the brochure has a small map with the caption “How to get to Washington Territory” showing the Northern Pacific Railroad routes.

The State Library hopes to digitize the brochure pamphlet and its maps and make them available on our website during 2007.