

Letter of M. B. Rees, ** a new arrival in Oregon, who came by ship, instead of across the plains. We pick up his story as he enters the Columbia River. *****

Buteville, Marion Co. O. T. ** Sept. 24th 1854.

Mr. Carroll Dear Sir:- In view of the promise you made writing thru the medium of Mrs. Carroll's letters, and the warm feeling of friendship you evidenced for this humble servant, while treading life's "swelling sea" in my Old Buckeye home, I feel it is a duty incumbent upon me, to write often and inform you from time to time, of the workings of this far off land. This land of Golden ease and plenty, where every wish is made reality, and every thought prolific. ** Probably nothing would be more interesting than a brief cronology of our arrival and future prospects.

We arrived the last of May at Astoria, named after John Jacob Astor. There still can be seen remnants of his old trading house. Here we expected to see something of a place, but were disappointed. There are 40 houses situated at the foot of a high mountain around which can be seen no tillable land, all is a bleak dreary waste so far as adapting any to agriculture purposes. We, like every other person who visits the country I suppose expect too much. The next place of notice was St. Helens, a very pretty place and built up in the last few years. Some beautiful prairies back from the shores some miles but not in view of the river. It was getting dark when we passed this place so could not see very well, and during the night we arrived at Portland, the head of navigation for ships on the Willamette. Here are some pretty farms in close proximity to the river. Back a short distance, one mile perhaps, the mountains rise heavenward which presents a very pretty scenery. Portland is the largest place in the Territory, said to be 1000 inhabitants. Many public buildings are going up including an academy which gives much life to the place. Oregon City is about 12 miles above where we reached the next day. There I felt somewhat at home as we were nearing my Brother's place, and he had lived here some time. It is situated close on the banks of the river. Back a short distance rises a rock ledge, 240 feet high, leaving only room for two streets and three rows of houses in the silliest places. It contains about 500 inhabitants and has reached its meridian for many years at least. There is however good water privileges which in time may give it a start again; but as it is, there are many buildings unoccupied and going to decay. The next morning we boarded a little steam boat which plies between Oregon City and Salem, the capital of this mighty Territory. Beaverville is about 18 miles above the city, between which places there are few signs of habitors, it is a wild, broken wilderness where no person would want to live unless compelled to by penury. We arrived at Beaverville about 10:00 A. M., and inquired about W. H., and was told he

lived $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles out on the prairie. We started and first had to mount a tremendous hill directly after leaving the river, arriving at my Brother's farm about noon. We were given a hearty welcome and invited into their home. **** The Willamette Valley, or French Prairie (where W. H. farm is situate), is said to be the best part of Oregon. It is about 100 miles long and 30 miles wide, and is or would be as pretty as White Prairie, Mich., if as thickly settled and as pretty buildings. Buildings are good enough though built in odd sites.

Now I propose to tell you something of our prospects. W. H. is at Portland working at his trade, and I am home putting in wheat -- have 10 acres sewed and propose putting in 50. That you may form some idea of farming in the valley of remuneration I will state what farmers who rented last year did. The gentleman who farmed W. H's. place, and finished threshing today, was 800 bushels after which he gets half after paying all expenses of threshing @ 15¢ per bu., and cutting (for which he paid \$3.00 per day & chuck). He will have country wheat at \$1.00 per bushel, \$80.00. His brother who farmed also about 160 acres came out in debt \$300.00.

(Writer closes with some personal family remarks, meaningless to our purpose) except I will include ****

Tell Mrs. Carroll that her brief letter found a hearty welcome in myself - though not addressed to me -, and hopes that she will favor us often. (then some funny remarks at what he calls Mrs. Carroll's Boston ways).

Signed: M. B. Rees.