

STEELE COUNTY.

Very Interesting Summary of Her Many Resources.

Advantages Paramount to Red River Valley Counties.

Steele county was organized on June 13 1883 in accordance with an act of the Dakota territorial legislature approved March 8, 1882. Prior to its organization it was included in Griggs and Traill counties.

Steele county is situated on the western margin of the famous Valley of the Red River of the north, and has for next neighbors the wealthy and fertile counties of Cass, Traill, and Grand Forks. The alluvial "gumbo" of the Valley here becomes modified into a rich black loam surface underlaid with a clayey sub-soil; while here also are born those undulations of the mighty prairie, which, growing as they sweep on to the westward, finally culminate in the Coteau Du Missouri. The Goose river and its branches cross the north-eastern part; the Cheyenne creeps along in close proximity to the entire length of the western boundary; while here and there over the whole surface are scattered many lakes, small, picturesque, and sufficient for all the needs which such bodies satisfy. The banks of the two main streams are thickly covered with tall trees which wave their branches in the Dakota breeze as fantastically and murmur as sweetly as ever do those of the storied East. Go where you will, a more attractive county than Steele will not be found in all the North-West.

The soil, as previously stated, is a rich black loam with a sub-soil of clay. Like the exclusively grain growing counties of the Valley, it produces great quantities of the cereals; while the rich and hardy grasses, and rolling surface of a large part, adapt it equally well to grazing.

Among the regular crops are Wheat, oats, barley, flax, millet and potatoes. Garden vegetables, currants, raspberries, and other small fruits are also successfully grown. Wheat is raised in immense quantities and of the best quality, Scotch fife being the prevalent kind. Conservative estimates place the average yield as high as from 16 to 18 bushels per acre, while in some seasons yields of from 40 to 50 bushels per acre on small fields have been known.

The situation of Steele county peculiarly fits it for wheat raising. It is situated sufficiently high so that the early frosts which occasionally visit the North West and nip the maturing crops of lower valley counties, do not so materially injure its prospects. Grain men have said that more No. 1 hard wheat was shipped from Hope during the great frost season of 1888 than from any other of their stations in the North West. While it thus escapes the worst results of early frosts, it in a no less degree seems secure from the droughts which at times interfere with the prosperity of higher counties to the west. To state it generally, it is said that Steele county has never suffered a real failure of crops.

Oats of the best quality are also raised in large quantities, the average yield being estimated at not far from 50 bushels per acre. The other cereals named above are raised as successfully as in other states where they are favorite crops. As a living demonstration of the success of garden cultivation, many farmers can be seen in the proper seasons, peddling through the towns all manner of garden products; such as, cabbage, turnips, lettuce, parsnips, celery, cauliflowers, onions and many others; for all of which they receive ready sales and good prices.

Hay grows naturally of such excellent quality as to be considered richer and better food for animals than timothy hay; and is secured so cheaply that the total cost in labor and money necessary to get it into stacks is but \$1.25 per ton. It is believed that timothy hay can be successfully grown and will be, if a need for it ever arises.

The pure, healthful atmosphere and splendid climate of the region make stock raising very successful. Disease among horned cattle, hogs and sheep is seldom if ever known. Hog cholera, which so frequently sweeps with great destruction through the eastern states never visits North Dakota.

Stock cattle can be kept through the winter on hay alone and in the spring be in excellent condition. Many cattle are already annually raised, and the industry is rapidly becoming ranked as one of the leading occupations of the county. A trip through the various sections of the county in the summer season would reveal large herds of fat cattle grazing leisurely in the ravines or on the level, or lying around in groups and masticating their cud of rich, sweet grass.

The raising of sheep has been thoroughly tested and found completely successful. There is little doubt but that in a very few years this industry will be on a rank equal to that of wheat raising.

No special manufacturing establishments are at present located in the county, but some are expected to be erected soon; and it is the matter of only a short time when the county will be supplied with as many as the requirements demand.

We thus find the people of the county engaged in not one only, but various important agriculture pursuits. These diversified farming industries insure it against future calamity. Frost no longer has its olden terrors; for if the wheat crop is injured, the sheep, cattle, and other resources will carry the farmer through. Besides, as has already been stated, Steele county has never suffered a real failure in crops. No chinch bugs or grasshoppers ravage the fields, no malignant disease sweeps off the stock.

Farm improvements are rapidly becoming fitted to the wealth of the people. Great barns and granaries can be seen in all parts, while the farm residences in the Goose river valley and some other localities would adorn a city of two thousand inhabitants.

And there is still plenty of room for immigrants. Probably not over sixty per cent. of the tillable land of the county is at present under cultivation; and plenty of land can be bought at surprisingly low figures.

A delightful and wonderfully salubrious climate; a pleasant and profitable location; a sure, easy and bountiful living; perfect equality of rights; intelligent and honest people; all these are found in Steele county, and what more could be sought by any one desirous of casting aside the inequalities and hardships of eastern states and European countries?