

A COMMUNITY HEALTH SURVEY

OF

OSWEGO, OREGON

BY

LLOYD A. WHEELWRIGHT

1930

REPORT ON A SANITARY SURVEY OF OSWEGO,
OREGON.

Lloyd A. Wheelwright

Oswego is located on the Pacific Highway, eight miles south from the center of Portland, Oregon. The Southern Pacific Railroad also maintains a station there. The town stands on a gentle slope overlooking the Willamette river to the east, and with lake Oswego about one half mile to the south and west. This lake is the drowned valley of Oswego creek -- drowned by a dam erected near its mouth. Accordingly the lake is long, tortuous, and moderately deep. Its environs are attractive -- the low wooded bluffs of the Willamette. Fertile and well tilled farm land lies to the west and south.

In the Willamette Valley, dry and moderately hot summers are the rule; the winters are long, temperate, and very rainy. They are truly characterized by the famous "Oregon Mist". Snow at Christmas time is a common but much commented upon occurrence. It soon melts away. Accordingly one meets with a great diversity of crops, and the land about Oswego is no exception to this although dairying seems to be especially popular.

In 1920 the census showed a population of 1818. It is expected to show 2700 in 1930. Seasonal changes are much smaller

OSWEGO

than one would suspect. The town clerk estimates that the non resident summer population numbers only seventy-five to one hundred persons. This is accounted for by the fact that most of the resorts about the lake are not included in the town of Oswego. Practically all of the people are white, and there seems to be a predominance of Anglo-Saxon blood. Residents of Oswego proper are attracted there chiefly for business offered by the highway, the resort, and the cement plant. Residents about the lake- the so called summer colony are of a slightly different class, evidently attracted there by the pleasant surroundings. Oswego is essentially a residential town.,

The government is organized on the council plan. Total revenue in 1930 was \$25,004.21 . Total expenditures were \$19,950.36 The total taxable evaluation is \$756,358.00 The following licenses are issued by the city: dog, building, peddlers, pool-hall, dance, and fire permits.

Health activities are of two kinds, official and non official. Non official activities are carried on by the Parent-Teachers Health Unit which aids the needy, especially by the loan of non expendable articles such as bed pans and hot water bottles for the sick. The City Health Department consists of one physician appointed by the council to serve part time at ten dollars (\$ 10.00) per month. Dr. McDougal does this work at present, and I am indebted to him for an explanation of his duties. These consist of:

1. Control of infectious diseases.
2. Establishment and maintenance of quarantine where necessary.

OSWEGO

Three years ago Dr. McDougal inaugurated a new policy when he ordered that all school children who were complaining of an itch, or who showed symptoms of a cold, be sent home pending his inspection. This was the cause of considerable ill feeling on the part of parents at first, but Dr. McDougal feels that it has worked out admirably. Scabies has been well controlled, and many contagious diseases with early upper respiratory symptoms may be thus early discovered. It is obvious that the school is Dr. McDougal's chief concern in an official capacity. According to his own statement, "all health activities are overshadowed by the metropolis of Portland, and the county seat at Oregon City." Butchers get their health cards and restaurants their licenses from Oregon City. The swimming pool is supervised from Oregon City. Venereal disease is controlled from Portland. Many persons when ill call a physician from Portland, who if he finds a communicable disease, often reports it to Oregon City rather than to the local health officer. The same applies to deaths which are more apt to take ^{place} in hospitals at Portland or Oregon City than at Oswego. Hence vital statistics are difficult to get and inaccurate at the best. Dairies are inspected chiefly by Portland Authorities. Hence it will be seen that Oswego's Public Health Department is limited in its activities almost entirely to the care of school children.

OSWEGO

The water supply is under municipal ownership, and comes from Portland. A twelve inch main connects with the Portland system, with a booster pump on the line. The main reservoir is a covered steel standpipe of 500,000 gallons capacity. Higher parts of the town are served by an additional booster pump and a 100,000 gallon stand pipe like the large one. It is possible to connect with an emergency supply from Lake Grove.

Portland's supply comes from Bull run. Here a 200 foot concrete dam is built across the river approximately thirty five miles east of the city. A 13,00 acre-foot tank supplies storage. Water is allowed to flow through the dam and over a stream bed for about three miles to the intake bays. Here screens in the head-works house filter out the coarser particles. Chlorinators are installed here. Three steel conduits carry the water to the main distributor reservoirs on Mt. Tabor. There are six distributor reservoirs and many stand pipes and tanks for storage. Bull run water is very pure both chemically and bacteriologically. Sixtyx B. Coli tests after chlorination are usually reported "A".

OSWEGO

SEWAGE , GARBAGE, AND REFUSE.

Unlike the water system, there is no publicly owned means of sewage disposal. Each household disposes of its own sewage through a septic tank or cess pool. Out side toilets are in vogue. The town clerk estimates that about three hundred (300) septic tanks are in use, and about seventy five (75) privies, all of the surface can type. One small, privately owned sewage system empties into the river. No city ordinances are directly applicable to the disposal of sewage. The ordinance concerning public nuisances might be used, however, to prevent any flagrant disregard of sanitation.



Public toilet facilities
are meager.

The system of sewage disposal outlined above is applicable only in a small community. In Oswego it seems to be fairly well

OSWEGO

regulated, but the open toilets are undoubtedly prolific fly breeders. It is probable that the health of neighboring communities is not adversely influenced by this system of sewage disposal.

Garbage of the non burnable sort is collected in ordinary sheet iron garbage cans. These must be placed on the alley by householders. A truck hired by the city then picks them up. Disposal is attended to by the man who takes the contract, and is done as he sees fit, but must be outside the city limits. At the present time all garbage is hauled to Portland.

Garbage which can be burned, may be disposed of in any manner which the owner chooses provided it is a sanitary manner and can not be called a public nuisance. A fine of not less than one dollar and not more than fifty dollars (\$1.00 to ~~\$x~~ \$50.00) is levied upon any individuals who do not comply with these city regulations.

A public nuisance ordinance is also applicable to the disposal of garbage and manure. Action of the council is necessary to abate a nuisance.

Manure is kept in tightly covered boxes and removed from the city limits once each week. Dead animals must be buried four feet

OSWEGO

deep. The streets are swept clean each Saturday.

This disposal of garbage seems fairly efficient and is the practical equivalent of that employed in larger communities. A healthy public opinion, such as seems to be present in Oswego, is more valuable than ordinances. Public health is probably well served by this plan.

VITAL STATISTICS.

OSWEGO

COUNTY COURT:
JUDGE, C. W. KRUSE

COMMISSIONERS:
W. A. PROCTOR
RICHARD WRIGHT
PHONE 459

Clackamas County Bureau of Health

WALTER H. MILLER, M. D., COUNTY PHYSICIAN

OREGON CITY, OREGON October 20, 1930

COUNTY NURSES:
MABEL HOWARD, R. N.
MARGARET LYNCH, R. N.

SECRETARY:
CIS PRATT
PHONE 312

Dr Lloyd A. Wheelwright,
U. of O. Medical School,
Portland, Oregon.

Dear Doctor Wheelwright;

I have your letter requesting information in regard to certain vital statistics. To get this information, as far as Oswego is concerned, is going to be very difficult, if not impossible, because of the fact that birth and death certificates are not, as a rule, specific in regard to the place at which they occurred. This is especially applicable to small towns, it may be quite different in a larger city. More than that, there are in Clackamas County a number of registration areas, each of which has a registrar who records births and death certificates without knowledge of this office. These are then forwarded to the State Board of Health, in Portland. I would suggest that you pay a visit to the State Board of Health, which is located in the Oregon Building, 6th and Oak, and inquire relative to these statistics.

Very truly yours

W. H. Miller
W. H. Miller, MD
County Physician.

P. S. In regard to control of venereal disease, there are no specific provision for its control, except that in instances where treatment can not be had from a private physician, because of lack of finances, they are taken care of by this office.

OSWEGO

Vital statistics for the town of Oswego alone, would be extremely difficult to get as shown by the enclosed letter from Dr. Miller. Moreover, they would not be especially significant standing alone. The Clackamas County statistics as found in annual reports of The State Board of Health of Oregon, are, therefore submitted.

CLACKAMAS COUNTY
VITAL STATISTICS

YEAR	POPULATION	BIRTHS	RATE	DEATHS	RATE
1925	42,100	656	15.5	403	9.5
1926	42,900	606	14.1	430	10.
1927	43,700	564	12.9	377	8.6
1928	44,495	584	13.1	482	10.8
1929	45,294	441	9.7	420	9.2

One is tempted to comment on the apparent decline in birth rate to a figure approximating the death rate.

Infant mortality tables are given below:

YEAR	DEATHS UNDER ONE YEAR	RATE PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS	STILLBIRTHS	RATE PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS
1925	36	54.8	15	
1926	27	44.5	9	
1927	21	37.2	17	
1928	25	42.8	12	
1929	15	34.0	18	

Does this decline in infant mortality reflect benefits from the developing knowledge of sanitation?

OSWEGO

The principal causes of death in Clackamas county in the years 1926 to 1929 inclusive, are given below. The year 1925 is not included because the system of reporting was different then, so that the table would not be consistent. Only conspicuous causes of death are listed here, estimated in deaths per 100000

ix		1926	1927	1928	1929
Influenza with pulmonary complications.	M	7	2.3	9.	17.7
	F	4.7	6.8	15.7	4.4
Tuberculosis of the respiratory system.	M	55.9	45.6	53.9	66.2
	F	60.6	54.7	31.5	44.2
Cancer and other malignancies.	M	50.3	41	39.3	26.4
	F	51.9	51.9	56.0	44.0
Cerebral hemorrhage	M	58.2	45.6	29.2	11.0
	F	53.6	45.6	15.7	6.6
Angina Pectoris	M	10.	11.4	6.7	17.7
	F	9.3	0	11.2	2.2
Other diseases of the heart except acute endocarditis	M	88.5	77.5	137.1	103.8
	F	109.5	91.2	110.1	83.9
Bronchopneumonia	M	16.3	4.6	13.5	11.0
	F	7.	16	20.2	6.6
Lobar Pneumonia	M	18.6	16.	27.0	24.3
	F	11.6	11.4	11.2	13.2
Chronic Nephritis	M	37.3	38.8	38.2	40.0
	F	11.6	20.5	20.2	19.9
Automobile Accidents	M	22.3	13.7	29.2	11.0
	F	4.7	2.3	15.7	6.6

OSWEGO

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

	1925		1926		1927		1928		1929	
	C	Dts	C	Dts	C	Dts	C	Dts	C	Dts
Smallpox	36	0	49	0	12	0	115	0	45	1
Typhoid	7	2	22	1	7	0	3	0	6	0
Diphtheria	59	3	29	5	15	0	19	0	16	1
Scarlet Fever	1126	1	237	2	132	0	22	1	26	0
Tuberculosis	29	38	38	53	28	46	31	44	40	52
Measles	10	0	144	1	175	2	60	2	112	0

A couple of odd facts are apparent in this table which probably show the pitfalls of statistics, especially when taken from relatively small groups. Smallpox according to this table is the least deadly of the communicable diseases as it has caused only one death in five years. There have been two hundred and fifty seven cases. Diphtheria with only 138 reported cases has caused nine deaths.

Apparently more people are dying of tuberculosis than are ill with it. This is because physicians are loath to report a case, but they must report a death.

OSWEGO

VENEREAL DISEASE

Control of venereal disease depends almost entirely upon two agencies, the County Public Health Unit, and the Portland Free Dispensary. Statistics for Clackamas County are given below.

YEAR	SYPHILIS	GONORRHEA	CHANCROID
1925	1	27	3
1926	0	16	2
1927	1	18	2
1928	4	17	0
1929	4	15	1

There are no local ordinances concerning venereal disease or prostitution. Dr. McDougal says that he does occasionally, in his capacity as health officer, deal with a case, but most of these outside his private practice go to Portland.

OSWEGO

MILK SUPPLY

The milk supply is controled mainly by the state and by city regulations in Portland, to which many of the dairies conform. Under the direction of the State Food and Dairy commission, surprise samples of milk are taken from all dairies in the state, and graded according to the score card shown below.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY
Dairy Division

SCORE CARD FOR MILK

Place

Class Exhibit No.

ITEM	Perfect Score	Score Allowed	Remarks
Bacteria	35	.....	Bacteria found per } cubic centimeter }
Flavor and odor	15	.....	Cowy, bitter, feed, } flat, strong
Sediment	10	.....	.....
Fat	15	.....	Per cent
Solids not fat	15	.....	Per cent
Temperature (street samples) or Acidity (prepared samples)	5	.....	{ Degrees or Per cent
Bottle and cap			5	{ Bottle ..... Cap .....
Total	100	.....	.....

Exhibitor:

Address:

(Signed):

Judges.

Date.....

OSWEGO

NO local ordinances, then, exist to govern the sale of milk in this town. It is, however, amply protected by the state.

Among the important dairies near Oswego are Crystal Springs, and Toney's Dairy. Crystal springs, owned by R. Hughes, has a herd of about 35 cows, clean, and healthy. They were tested for tuberculosis in 1930. The yard is fairly clean, the barn floor clean and limed. The gutters are all tight, although they empty rather close to the barn. The barn itself is whitewashed.

The milk house is of good construction, well equipped, and clean. A tube cooler is used. The utensils are kept clean, and are sterilized by hot water.

The principal points of shipment from this dairy are Oswego and Lake Grove.

OWEGO

SANITARY NUISANCES

These seem to be few and not especially obnoxious. Dust rises mainly from the highway and streets. It is not large in amount, and nothing is done to prevent its presence. One gets a general impression of moderate neatness and respectability from the town; empty lots are clean, dumps are not present. Owing to the local topography, mosquitoes have few breeding places, and neither flies nor mosquitoes are abundant. There are no large industrial plants to produce smoke. At times the railroad and highway cause considerable noise, but not an undue amount. Stables, piggeries, etc appear to be few in number and well kept. According to the town clerk's statement, a public nuisance is not defined except by common usage. The council acts on each case individually as it is brought before them. The fine to be imposed has previously been stated as not less than one dollar and not more than fifty.

OSWEGO

INDUSTRIAL HYGENE

Oswego has one industry -- the cement plant. Superintendent H. Shipley very kindly allowed me to visit this plant, sending the draftsman with me as a guide. I was considerably impressed by the efforts to minimize accidents and prevent ill health among the workmen.

Water is derived from the Portland system. Sewage is disposed of into the river by a privately owned system which seems sufficient.

"Safty follows
wisdom"



From the highway one sees a concrete slab bearing the motto

OSWEGO

"safty follows wisdom" This is the Portland Cement Association's trophy, awarded for a perfect safty record in 1928. By the office is an elaborate and conspicuous accident meter, not now kept up, however. All accidents, even mánor cuts, must be reported within fifteen minutes. First aid is given by a specially trained team chosen from among the workmen. The Workmens Compensation Act is accepted by this company. My guide informed me that the principal hazards came from: (a) moving machinery, (b) high tension electrical apparatus. All dangerous wheels, rollers etc were well equipped with guards.

The amount of dust inhaled by workmen must be considerable, especially in the shiping department. This room is often an a perfect cloud of cement dust, despite very clever sack filling devices. Cement dust is considered by the management to be harmless and no ill effects have been observed by them.

OSWEGO

MISCELLANEOUS

From reading this report, one might easily get the idea that Oswego is very poorly supervised with regard to health. This is far from true. As a matter of fact the Clackamas County Health Unit fully compensates for any defects in the local organization. Reports from this unit have been studied and clippings from them are appended below, the first report being in 1924.

CLACKAMAS COUNTY REPORT

During the six months of 1924 the personnel of the health department was completed and plans were made to carry out an organized system of county health work.

In January, 1925, Dr. L. E. Briscoe resigned to engage in work in the veteran's bureau in Portland. Dr. Frank Wallace was appointed to succeed him, having completed his internship in Bellevue hospital, New York, and later was sent from Andalusia, Alabama, by the International Health Board of the Rockefeller Foundation, to take up his duties in Oregon City.

On account of lack of room in the office additional space was secured and a small surgery installed and equipped to care for the needs of the county dependents and also to carry out corrective work for school children, who are unable to afford the service of a family physician. During this period the dental clinic was started and the dental survey of the school children made.

During the latter part of 1925 and early part of 1926 a campaign was carried out to actively immunize the school and pre-school children against diphtheria by giving toxin-antitoxin. 2,563 children were immunized against diphtheria up to July 1926. At the same time 302 Dick tests were given and later in the year it was anticipated to give streptococcic toxin to the positive Dicks.

Very few cases of smallpox were reported in the county. However, on account of the large number of cases in the coast cities, 1,235 school children were inoculated against smallpox.

Routine inspection was carried out in 145 schools, 8,000 pupils being examined.

A survey of the milk supply was carried out and a milk ordinance passed in Oregon City relative to the sale of milk, cream and buttermilk in Oregon City.

Many pre-school and infant clinics were held during the early part of 1926, Dr. Anna Flood, of the National Child Welfare Bureau, giving her assistance in many of the clinics. Also, at this time, arrangements were made for a prize well-baby clinic at the county fair in the fall.

During the period of this report there has been the greatest cooperation with the county court, school superintendent, and the bureau of health. The county appropriation for the health department has been greatly increased.

Report of Clackamas County

The Clackamas county health unit has operated continuously since 1924.

During the biennium the untimely death of Dr. F. W. Wallace occurred. He had been health officer and county physician for nearly three years. His work was taken up by Dr. W. H. Miller in October, 1927.

One of the most notable achievements of the unit under Dr. Wallace's direction was an extensive scarlet fever immunization campaign, in which over 2,600 school children were immunized, the one dose of recinoleated streptococcus antigen having been employed. A great many children were also protected from diphtheria and smallpox.

Because of the proximity of Clackamas county to the metropolitan area of Portland a wide variety of contagious diseases can very easily be introduced. The people are, therefore, constantly made aware of the fact that contagious diseases still exist and are coming to realize the tremendous value of immunization. This has been particularly true of smallpox during the past six months. There exists a fine spirit of cooperation between the school authorities, the P. T. A., other community organizations, the county court and the health unit.

Two of the county's largest school districts have seen the desirability of employing a nurse to work solely among the school children of these districts. The unit has obtained the aid of the county health association in the way of a subsidy, so that the employment of the additional nurse could be made possible. It has been found that this plan allows the other two county nurses more time to devote to maternal, infancy and child welfare work. Also more work can be done among the tuberculous and tuberculosis contacts. In this connection a number of clinics have been held at the Portland open-air sanatorium by Dr. Ralph Matson and Dr. Bissaillon.

A projection lantern was added to the equipment of the unit. It has proved to be a valuable aid in the educational work among school children and the various county organizations.

It has been gratifying to observe the increase in corrective work due to the establishment of the dental and tonsil clinics. Over eleven hundred children attended the dental clinics conducted by the unit. Eighty-two children who could not afford the services of their regular physician had their tonsils removed at the office of the county physician.

REPORT OF CLACKAMAS COUNTY

JULY 1, 1928, TO JUNE 30, 1930, INCLUSIVE

The Clackamas County Health Unit has been particularly interested in diphtheria immunization, vaccination against smallpox, and correction of defects among school children. In addition to this it was concerned with every public health activity peculiar to this community. In addition to this, much time was spent in the care of the indigent sick, who in many instances required hospitalization. Insane hearings, feeble-minded examinations and visits to both the county and city jails were made by the health officer.

It was during this biennium that the county court and the Oregon City commission took over the entire support of the unit since federal and other aid has been entirely withdrawn. There are, however, two other sources of revenue, the Clackamas County Health Association, which lends its support to the dental clinic, and also the Oregon State Board of Medical Examiners.

Inasmuch as the county covers a large area much time must be spent on the road traveling from place to place. Numerous health educational talks have been made throughout the county. Very often it has been necessary to spend an evening with various community and parent-teacher organizations. Several of the dentists have also given of their time in this respect. An exhibit has been maintained at several fairs.

There have been no severe epidemics although all of the common contagious and communicable diseases have occurred. It appears that the incidence of diphtheria is being markedly decreased due to the extensive immunization that is being carried on. During the last six months of this biennium there has not been a single case of diphtheria from which a positive culture was obtained.

With respect to general sanitation it may be said that the unit is very much in need of a full-time sanitary inspector. The two county nurses endeavor to visit all of the public schools, submit water samples and report to the school directors on necessary improvements. Community water supplies are inspected by the health officer assisted by the state's sanitary engineer. The same applies to auto and industrial camps. Assistance in the inspection of dairies and restaurants is obtained from the State Food and Dairy Commission. All laboratory examinations are made by the State Board of Health whenever required.

OSWEGO

Numerous infant and preschool clinics have been held with the result that many defects have been corrected. Provisions for the care of expectant mothers have been made by the nurses in many cases. Clackamas county is particularly fortunate in having the aid of the Portland Free Dispensary and the Doernbecher Children's Hospital for the treatment of many of its poor. Additional office space has recently been obtained, which has been much needed. This will facilitate the installation of permanent dental equipment and give the much-needed space for minor surgical operations.

AUTO CAMP

The grounds are reasonably clean, but not very attractive. Water supply comes from Bull Run. Separate and plainly marked toilets of the flush type are provided. Sewage is received into a septic tank. Garbage is placed in cans and burned or buried. There are twelve cabins each having ~~just~~ two rooms. Mattresses are clean and provided with covers. Drainage is good, the camp being on a gentle slope.



OSWEGO

The town has four restaurants and one lunch counter. There are four soda fountains. Dishes are not sterilized except by washing. City water is used in all. Food handlers cards are obtained from portland. There is but one rooming house, the Oswego Lake Hotel. City water is used. There are clean flush toilets, and the place is fairly neat. The windows are not screened.



OSWEGO

GENERAL SUMMARY:

The town is pleasantly situated, with easy access to Portland and other nearby communities. In general appearance it is reasonably clean. The health officer seems to be both interested and proficient in his work. Water is controlled by the town government, and is derived from an excellent source of supply, namely the Portland water supply. I saw nothing to indicate pollution of this supply in Oswego. Sewage disposal is but loosely regulated, and is privately done. Never the less, there seem to be no glaring infractions of sanitary principles. The same is true of garbage. In its control of communicable diseases and venereal disease, the town is somewhat handicapped by its proximity to a large source of supply, namely Portland, and by its accessibility to travellers. On the other hand, the facilities for combating such diseases, which the ordinary small town could not have, are open to this town. The milk supply is largely controlled by State authorities, and the influence of Portland. From general sanitary nuisances this town is almost free. The cement plant is well organized from a health standpoint.

In criticism, one might say that there is a little too much dependence upon county, state, and Portland, organizations and too little dependence upon home organizations. There is however, a degree of civic pride which results in a wholesome town.