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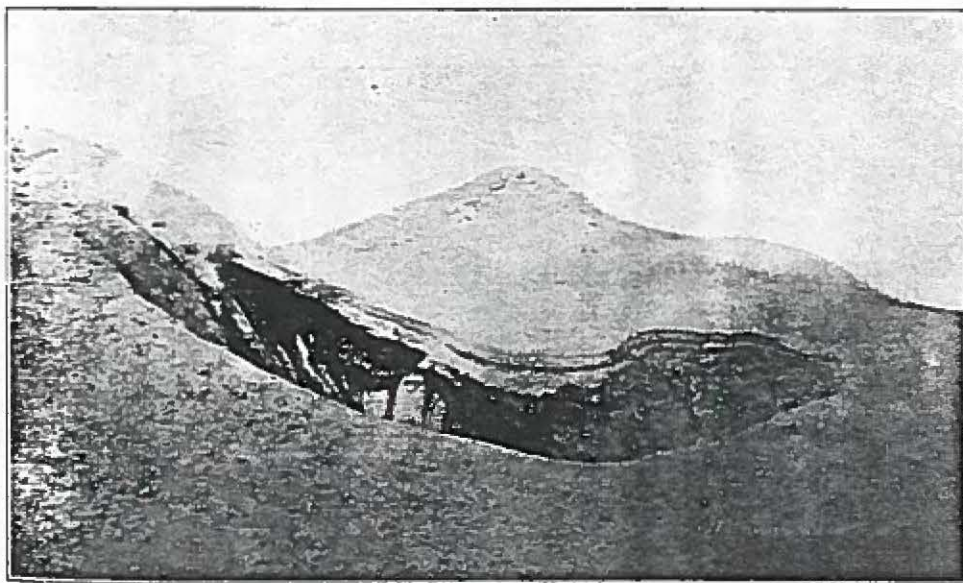
THE MT. LASSEN ERUPTION

By RICHARD H. BOERKER

MT. LASSEN, the only active volcano in the United States proper, is situated in the southeastern part of Shasta County, California, and is the last of a series of great volcanic cones which begin with Mt. Rainier in Washington. In years gone by this series of volcanoes was instrumental in upbuilding the mountainous region of the Pacific Northwest.

The first eruption occurred in the latter part of May, 1914, and it is stated upon good authority that the first outbreak seen by local inhabitants was on May 29. Since then fifty or more eruptions have occurred and with very few exceptions these have been of ever increasing violence. The last eruptions of which the writer has any knowledge are indeed said to have been accompanied by luminous bombs and fire.

The writer had the good fortune of being stationed in the proximity of Mt. Lassen most of the past summer and witnessed many of the eruptions. The first trip made to the summit was accomplished on June 4, and the trip, made for the most part over deep snow, wound up on the summit in a howling snowstorm. We were compelled to spend the night at the brink of the hissing crater in the Fire Lookout Station on the topmost pinnacle, 10,437 feet in the air. The next morning, June 5, the mountain was lost in the thick haze and snow clouds and practically nothing could be seen until noon time. At that time the descent into the old crater was made and the new crater was viewed. The huge gap measured 275 feet long and evidently was then in one of the pauses between heavy explosions. Thick volumes of



MT. LASSEN'S HISSING CRATER ON SEPT. 3, 1914.

THIS CRATER'S MOUTH WAS EIGHT HUNDRED FEET LONG AND FROM ONE HUNDRED TO FOUR HUNDRED FEET WIDE AND ABOUT ONE HUNDRED FEET DEEP. NOTE THE FIGURES OF THE THREE MEN ON THE RIGHT HAND SIDE OF THE CRATER, AND THE STEAM AND SMOKE ON THE LEFT HAND SIDE. THE PEAK IN THE BACKGROUND IS ALMOST HIDDEN BY THE SMOKE HAZE.

Boerker (Mt.)

steam, laden with sulphur smoke were rising and cracks were appearing in the ground. The walls of the crater were perpendicular and huge icicles hung from the rim of the crater formed by the condensation of the steam rising from either end in huge volumes. On the west side of the crater everything was covered with a heavy blanket of light gray ash into which we sank over our boot-tops. So light was this ash that it flew into the air at every step. On the east side the same material seemed to have been thrown out in the form of mud and lay frozen hard as rock. What little snow remained near the crater was buried under a layer of stones and boulders. The larger boulders had sunk down into the snow, creating many treacherous pits.

The eruption of June 14 was the heaviest one up to that date. It occurred at a time when several visitors were viewing the crater and almost resulted fatally for one of the party. There have been many narrow escapes and daring ascents during the summer, most of which will never be recorded. Hundreds visited the crater during July and August and the fact that they were taking their lives in their hands seemed to have little effect upon their eagerness to see the hissing crater. The eruptions do not seem to occur with any regularity. Some days there are as many as three, all very violent, and then again there may not be an eruption for two weeks. Many of the eruptions have lasted several hours and sometimes there would be a series of eruptions, one following another.

Many geologists and volcanologists were attracted by the violence of Mt. Lassen and paid the mountain a visit. Some made several ascents. All in one accord they gave their opinions that the

old mountain was a real volcano and no imitation. They predicted earthquakes and they came. Some predicted that

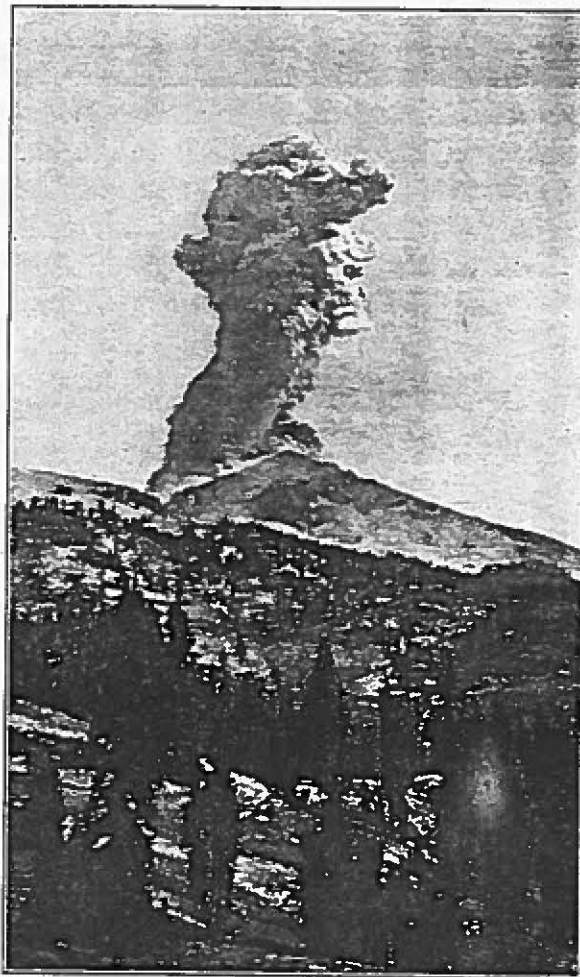


Photo by R. H. Boerker.

BEGINNING OF THE BIG ERUPTION.

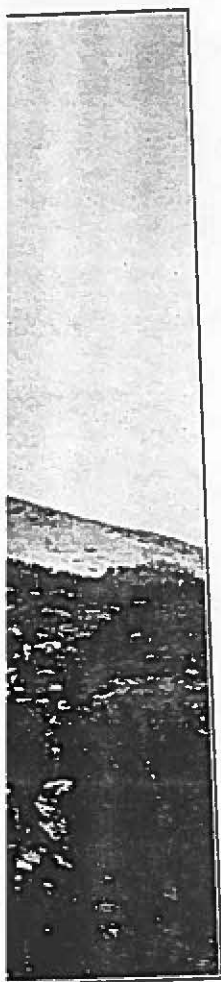
THIS WAS THE FIRST COLUMN OF STEAM AND SULPHUR VAPOR WHICH WAS SEEN TO SHOOT HIGH IN THE AIR.

the volcano would become very active and actually become dangerous. This stage has almost been reached, judging from the latest reports. In fact, there is no reason for overlooking the possibility of lava flow accompanied by destruction of plant and animal life.

Being engaged in making a map of the high country around Mt. Lassen, the writer made the ascent of about a dozen peaks in the vicinity of the old volcano and also climbed Lassen several

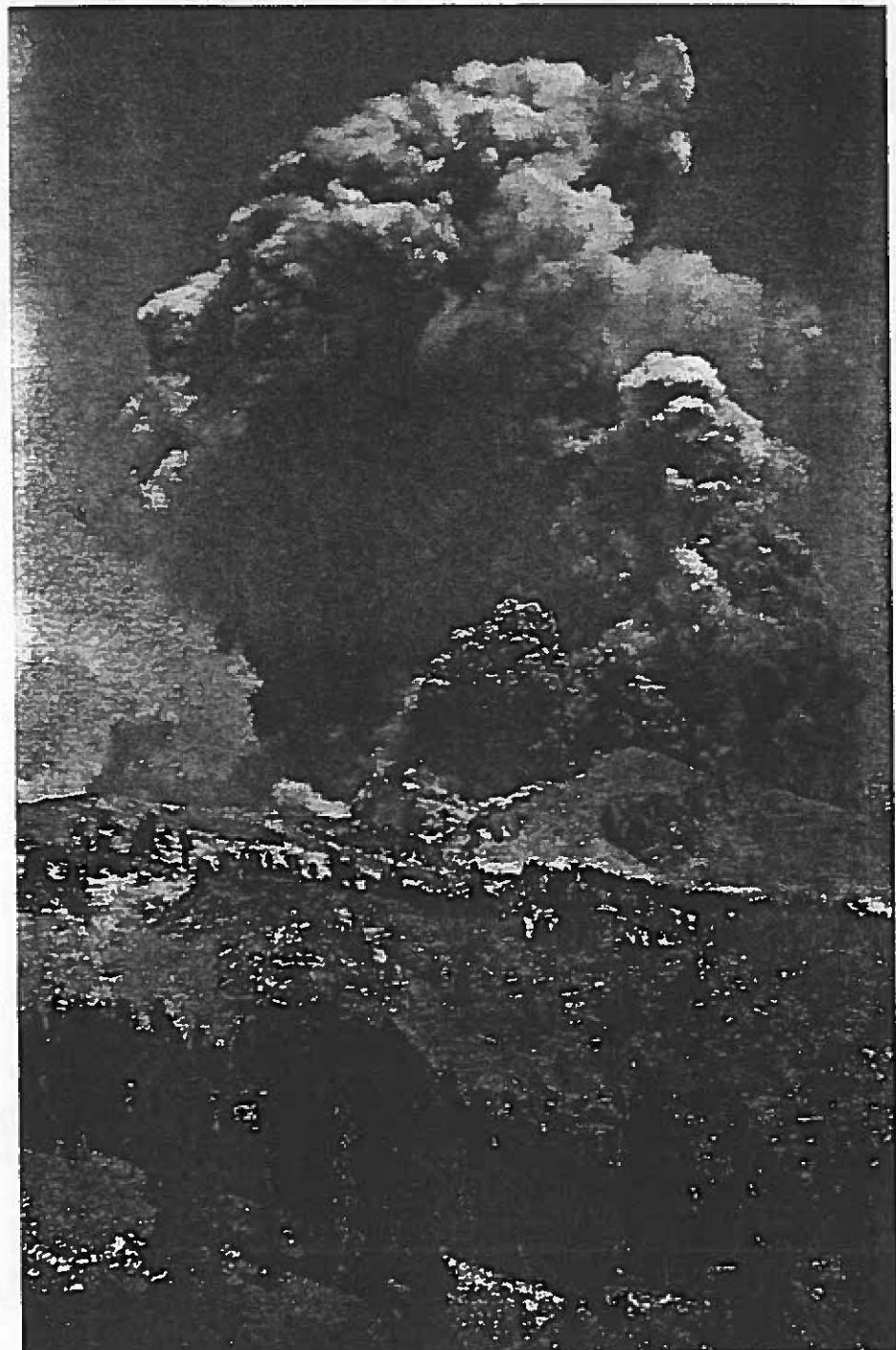
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VULCAN HIMSELF.

IN THIS NOVEL FORMATION OF THE SMOKE CLOUD HANGING OVER MT. LASSEN AFTER A PARTICULARLY VIOLENT ERUPTION THE AUTHOR SNAPPED HIS CAMERA JUST IN TIME TO CATCH THE STRIKING PROFILE SEEN SO DISTINCTLY ON THE LEFT EDGE OF THE CLOUD. IT IS OF VULCAN HIMSELF.

times. The base camp was established only 2 miles from the rim of the crater and from this camp, at an elevation of over 8,000 feet many excellent pictures were possible. Many eruptions were witnessed in all their grandeur and the rumblings and tremors of the earth often made one wish he were elsewhere.

The ascents of the peak made by the writer in the latter part of August and the beginning of September were made for securing triangulation points for a general map of the region. Plane table work at the brink of an explosive volcano is not the pleasantest job imaginable, hence such visits were usually made as brief as possible and not any oftener than was absolutely necessary. These ascents showed that the crater had increased considerably in size since June. The crater was at the beginning of September about 800 feet long and 350 feet wide and the country for at least a mile around was covered by a thick blanket of light volcanic ash. Practically all the snow that was left on the mountain was covered by this ash and the water it soaked up from the snow made it look black. Hence Mt. Lassen this summer not only acted like a volcano but decidedly took on the ghastly appearance of one. The Forest Fire Lookout Station was at that time still standing but the roof and sides had numerous large and small holes in them. One noticed, while walking over the rocks and volcanic ash on top, numerous large depressions in the ash and rock where large boulders had fallen. These holes occurred as much as a mile from the crater and they serve as evidences of the severity of the explosions.

Up to the present time there has been no destruction of life of any form. No

timber or other natural resource has been destroyed as far as the writer knows. The heavy clouds of ash laden steam that are thrown out of the crater

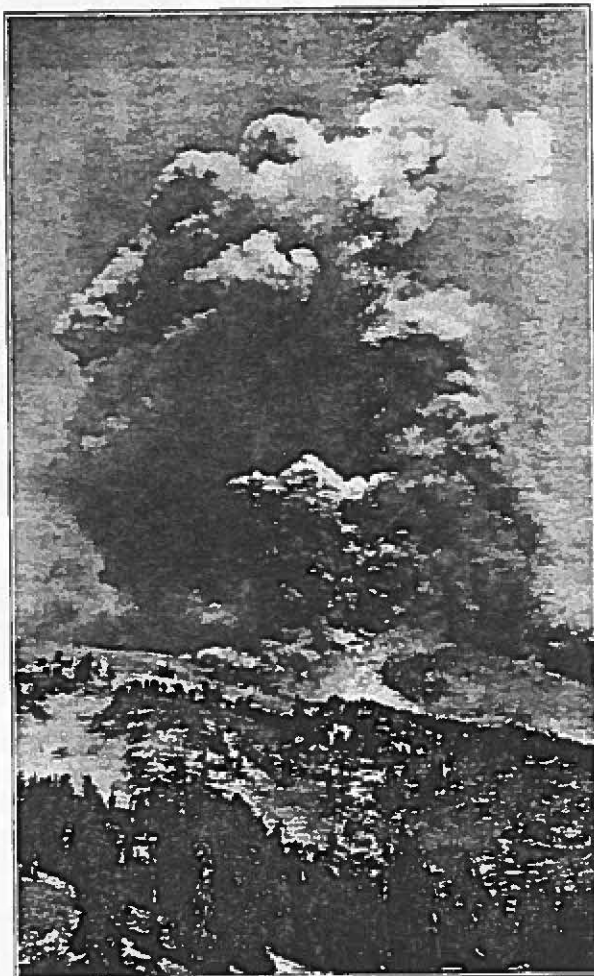


Photo by R. H. Boerker.

THIRD STAGE OF THE ERUPTION.

THICK BLACK ASH LADEN STEAMS COVER THE ENTIRE MOUNTAIN. SOMETIMES THIS IS CARRIED FOR FIFTEEN OR TWENTY MILES. THE ENTIRE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN IS COVERED WITH THIS FINE VOLCANIC ASH TO A DEPTH OF EIGHT OR TEN FEET.

at the time of an eruption are often carried by the wind for many miles. The most violent of these eruptions have sent these clouds with the help of the wind for 20 miles or more. The height to which these great columns of vapor are thrown has been quite accurately determined by Forest Ranger

J. M. Stark of 1 Lookout 15 miles Mt. Lassen and as high as 25,000 violent eruptions.

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J. M. Stark of the Turner Mt. Fire Lookout 15 miles to the southwest of Mt. Lassen and his figures range up as high as 25,000 feet for the most violent eruptions.

Many conflicting stories have been circulated concerning this mountain, especially by newspapers. No accounts should be considered authentic unless they emanate from such sources as the

United States Forest Service or the Geological Survey. The tremendous interest that this volcano has aroused in all parts of the world will undoubtedly make it a Mecca for tourists next summer. Being in the heart of the National Forest Region of California it will be visited by thousands of campers next summer.

FOREST PRODUCTS FEDERATION

By E. A. STERLING

AT a preliminary meeting called by the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association in Chicago on December 17, a tentative organization was created which combines under one head, as never before, the manufacturing, wholesale and retail lumber interests for the mutual benefit of all concerned.

The primary object is the better merchandising of lumber and solution of the related problems which this subject involves. The organization as inaugurated, opens the way for developments of great importance to the lumber industry and forest interests in developing a policy which will insure the continued use of wood in all situations for which it is best fitted. This in turn should bring about closer utilization and more rational use of forest products. If the new organization fails to grasp the larger opportunities, and to make definite progress along the lines indicated, it will demonstrate the inability of the lumber interests to cooperate broadly to their mutual advantage and will produce wide economic evils in an industry which is second only to agriculture in magnitude and importance.

The specific accomplishment at this preliminary meeting was the acceptance of a plan for the creation of a Forest Products Federation and the appointment of a committee of five to have general charge of arrangements for a mass meeting to be held two or three months later. The represen-

tative character of the Federation is indicated by the personnel of the committee of five, which is as follows: R. H. Downman, New Orleans, La., president, National Lumber Manufacturers' Association; Gordon C. Edwards, Ottawa, Ont., president, National Wholesale Lumber Dealers' Association; L. W. Crow, Chicago, Ill., president, Lumberman's Association of Chicago; Julius Seidel, St. Louis, Mo., wholesale and retail lumber dealer; J. R. Moorehead, Kansas City, Mo., secretary, Southwestern Lumberman's Association.

While the program for the coming meeting will not be definitely announced until after a conference by the committee, the general character of the work is indicated by the suggestions of Chairman J. E. Rhodes, in his opening address at the preliminary meeting. In this talk Mr. Rhodes suggested the following topics for consideration, some of which will no doubt be considered and reported upon by standing committees at the first general meeting of the Federation. The topics mentioned by Mr. Rhodes include:

Building codes.

The comparative price of lumber and other materials.

What is being done to advertise substitutes for wood.

Definite information regarding the fire prevention movement, and the part which wood plays in creating a fire menace to public life and property.



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