

The "Crater Lake Cut-Off" a Beautiful Drive From Canyonville Up the South Umpqua River to Oregon's Wonder Spot



—Photo Courtesy Oregon Journal

(By Lou Knight.)

Tradition tells us that many years ago, an Indian, the chief of a wandering tribe, came to the top of Canyonville mountain in search of a place to pitch his tents in peace, and methinks I can hear him saying:

"Umpqua, Umpqua-a," as with hand shading his eyes from the sun's leveled rays, he stands lost in admiration, for his gaze rests on a fertile valley spread out in all its glory of green pastures and abundant water supply.

The white man of today is no less impressed and expresses the same delight while motoring along the highway, known as the Cut-off. The Cut-off is the county road paralleling the South Umpqua river from Canyonville to Crater lake by the way of Tiller Trail, Klamath Falls, the Crater, thence on to Diamond lake and eastern Oregon points. The Cut-off shortens the distance between Portland and Crater lake some eighty miles.

Leaving Canyonville you travel eastward on an easy grade through one of the richest farm districts in Southern Douglas county, with their up-to-date, modern homes and out buildings, and you pass by large prune orchards of both French and Italian variety; and their annual output of millions of pounds of dried product attest to the productivity of the soil.

Rosy cheeked apples, rich melon pears, cherries of large size and finest flavor, and peaches that

make your mouth water have been raised commercially for years.

A new variety of sweet prune known as the "Date," is at present holding a royal seat in new orchards being set out. The fruit when dried runs to larger sizes, requiring but twenty to thirty per cent sugar, with a distinct date flavor. It is becoming more popular each year.

Another new sweet prune is being brought out this year, having been developed by Mr. Roach, near Tiller. It will prove equal to the Date if present indications are fulfilled.

This valley soil and climate are also adapted to the raising of walnuts, as the few trees now bearing have proven beyond a doubt that commercially they are a success. Their size is large, kernels plump and the grafted stock is a sure crop, as the few trees I have visited this year were like a picture with their long limbs bending until they touched the ground with the finest Franquette and Mayette.

Figs are another new fruit to this valley, that is being tried out successfully. Loganberries, Mammoth blackberries, strawberries, currants, and in fact anything in the fruit and vegetable line, barring tropical, will grow and yield abundantly of their fruits if given proper cultivation. Where nature has done so much, man need do but little to make a success in Douglas county.

For many years after white men settled in this valley, they knew little fruit but the native wild that grew abundantly in many places. Elderberries, blackberries, huckleberries, both blue and black, salmon berries, thimbleberries, blueberries and crabapples were among those most plentiful, and most of these we still have; a little more difficult to get, but with all our later improved grafted stock they are hard to beat.

Among the very first white settlers in this valley, came John Weaver and his sisters. One of the latter still lives here, Grandma Beaman, at the age of eighty-nine. It was she and her sister, Margaret Weaver, that were the first to bring seeds, nuts and even small rooted plants across the plains to start as it were the first orchard, in this valley. Their skill and patience were so well rewarded that many a seedling peach and walnut tree are still bearing their fruit, as a monument to their labor and will, even unto the third and fourth generation.

For some years we have been experimenting with winter cauliflower, or broccoli, at present we are past the experimental stage and are growing large acreages for carload shipment. This valley seems especially located to get the best results for this popular winter vegetable, being sheltered from cold east winds and hard freezing weather, which alone insures, big, solid heads, that burn snow white

from amid their green coverings, and bring top prices on the eastern market.

Mr. Beyers, who specialized in broccoli, has become authority on seeds, plants and harvesting. He has proven the old saying to be true, "That where you lose your money is the place to look for it," by not becoming discouraged with his first small mistakes and failures, but in the face of seeming disaster, he stuck, planting again and again, as did a few others, until they found the seed best adapted to this climate and that would bring plants that would mature at the proper time of year, as harvest time here brings best returns to the growers when the broccoli is ready for market in February and March.

Miss Clough comes next with her pet hobby, the improved Petite prune, and Mr. Snyder has his truck farm in connection with grain, fruit and sheep. His acres of tomatoes and melons have tickled the palate of many a diner.

Other farmers throughout the valley specialized in grain, corn, prunes, livestock and dairying. The latter is only in its infancy, but which can be developed to a very fine stage if taken in hand in a business way. This soil is well adapted for either clover or alfalfa, and the mild, winters and long warm summers make it possible to cut four and five crops of beautiful, green hay, if irrigated, and plenty of water can be had for the

pumping as the South Umpqua river has water enough to supply all needful for the entire valley and still reduce the stream less than half, which flows on to the sea.

The people have not awakened yet to the great possibilities of Douglas county for dairying purposes, where the land can be irrigated. We have the soil; we have the water, and we have the climate, but we see visions of big money made in something new, and overlook what is under our feet. So many have the idea that to dairy successfully you must live down amid the fog and rain along the coast; but that is wrong. Alfalfa is by nature a desert plant and with proper care will stand a lot of dry weather, as it is one of the deepest rooted forage plants we have; but, with hot weather and plenty of water, your hay crop springs up like mushrooms in a hotbed and you get double and triple the amount of hay per acre, where it is warm, than you would in a country with long, wet, backward springs. Anyway, I'm in for seeing it tried out. I believe we have the very best ideal conditions for dairying and all its products as can be found anywhere.

Peaches and cream are as native to this valley as corn is to Kansas or wheat to Missouri.

Poultry also attest the industry of the housewife. Like the moon, it's a fever we all get when

we first move on the ranch, but so often in a haphazard fashion that it takes patience and time to overcome our first enthusiasm and foolish mistakes. When we get it sifted down to a business deal and find there is money to be made in droves of turkeys of from twenty-five to a hundred or more and even our "Sister Webfoot," the lowly goose, comes in for a contribution to the pocketbook with its plump roasts and downy feathers, while of chickens and eggs we have a plenty.

The honeybee with its lazy drone, is also an asset to the farm for those that will care for them, and here I must admit there are few things kept on the ranch that bring as many net dollars as the bees, according to investment.

Rud and roan Durham cattle, Hereford and Pole Angus are very common and pleasing sights, standing at the water holes or roaming the green pasture lands, and stockmen driving their droves backward and forward through this valley to Fort Klamath, Diamond lake and other government ranges are spring and fall events.

Almost every rancher keeps his small bunch of sheep and many also have goats, as both are a profitable asset to the farm. The sheep eat weeds and waste from corners and cornfield, where nothing else could be turned, while goats keep the pastures clean of vines and brush that would otherwise over-run and choke out the grass. Therefore, they are profitable aside from their increase and wool.

Hogs, too, can be kept at a good profit, when raised in connection with dairying or where you have plenty of clover and alfalfa pasture. I think there are more hogs shipped annually from this valley than any other of its size in the county, as they are shipped out by carloads every fall to Portland.

Timber, little need be said, as every one knows what Oregon fir is. We have two small mills in this valley, which supplies our needs for all building purposes and county road work; unless some more venturesome and progressive person wishes a finer article in finished lumber, then he must go to large mills.

Another place Oregon fir is hard to beat is on a cold, dreary winter's eve, when the open fireplace is piled high with limbs and knots and snowy corn is popping on the hearth, then a big pan of Douglas county apples, colored like June roses and plenty of walnuts and hazel nuts for the gathering. Oh, boy! Who wouldn't stay at home?

For sports we have the chase of the antlered herd and from the number passing down the highway laying on the running boards of motor cars during the open season, you would think that nature had tucked away somewhere within these mountains, a natural breeding pen of mammoth proportions for deer any very plentiful despite the fact so many are killed each year.

Whipping the cold, mountain streams for the flinty family, and the hunter's delight with his pack of fox hounds and gun after the wily coyote and many a black bear, and not infrequently a panther falls before his unerring aim.

The road known as the Cut-off is being pushed rapidly to a finish, by aid of the county, state and government. It will tap large belts of standing timber, open the way to the mines and other resources of great wealth and reflects due credit on the progressiveness of the people behind the work.

There are 4,000 acres of prunes in Douglas county.

Douglas county extends from the Cascade mountains on the east to the Pacific ocean on the west.

The water power runs on the North Umpqua river in Douglas county have assumed a total of 259,000 horsepower.

Douglas county shipped out eighty carloads of green prunes in 1924.

Douglas county has invested over \$1,000,000 in permanent highways.

Flower bulbs can be successfully grown in this county, thus adding another paying industry to the long list we have now.

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