

## KITTITAS COUNTY, W. T.

IN 1883 the Territorial Legislature divided the large county of Yakima, and of the northern portion formed the county of Kittitas. The new county lies very near the geographical center of the Territory, three-fourths of it being north of the forty-sixth parallel. On the north the Wenatchee River forms its boundary line; on the west the great Columbia flows between it and the great bunch grass plateau known as the "Big Bend Country;" Yakima County lies to the south; and on the west it meets the counties of King and Pierce on the summit ridge of the Cascade Mountains. Its area of 3,600 square miles presents a surface generally mountainous and rugged, interspersed with well-watered and fertile valleys in the north and west, sinking toward the southeast into beautiful rolling hills and broad stretches of grassy plain. The nutritious bunch grass, the "stockman's friend," covers the plains and hills and throws its picket line far up the sloping sides of the mountains.

Naturally the leading industry was stock raising for many years after the first settlement of the country. The majority of those who engaged in this business now constitute the wealthiest citizens of the county. Twenty years ago this great industry began, and it is only ten years since the great fertility of the soil induced many settlers to engage in farming. The soil is peculiarly adapted to the growth of cereals. Wheat averages from thirty to thirty-five bushels to the acre in the Kittitas Valley, barley forty, and oats from forty-five to fifty. This yield is maintained year after year. Drought is unknown, the irrigating ditches that rim the valley in all directions supplying a ceaseless flow of pure water from the numerous mountain streams. Vegetables grow abundantly and of large size, while all kinds of berries thrive.

The principal valley is that of Kittitas, about thirty-five miles long and ten wide. Through it runs the Yakima River in a southeasterly direction. On the east side of the stream, and near the center of the valley, lies Ellensburg, the county seat, a thriving town of 500 inhabitants. It was founded many years ago by Hon. John Shandy, now representing Kittitas and Yakima counties in the Territorial Legislature. With his family he settled there and built a trading post, about which the town has gradually gathered. It contains quite a number of large buildings, nearly every kind of business being represented. There are four large general stores of merchandise, three hotels, a bank, three blacksmith shops, three drug stores, two saddlery shops, one millinery store, and several feed stables, restaurants, bakery, etc. Two weekly papers are published, and the people enjoy the advantages of a daily mail and connection by stage line with Yakima and points beyond to the Columbia and the railroad. A school house, which cost \$2,500, is one of the institutions of the town. Preparations are being made to found an academy, to be conducted under the auspices of the Presbyterian denomination. Two church organizations exist, and for one an edifice is in course of construction. Five grist mills and the same number of sawmills are located at various points in the

valley, which supply flour and lumber to Yakima and Kittitas counties, and even across the Columbia to the Big Bend.

The altitude of Ellensburg is 1,500 feet above the sea level. The winter weather is clear and cold, the thermometer in extreme seasons reaching 30 degrees below zero. This is seldom, however, and the usual winter weather is sunny and bracing. Snow occasionally falls to the depth of two feet, but soon succumbs to the melting breath of the Chinook wind, which does not neglect Kittitas in its travels inland. The most disagreeable feature of the climate are the strong winds of spring and summer, but to these one quickly becomes accustomed. Taken as a whole, the climate is an agreeable one, the summers being pleasant and not too warm, and the winter clear and invigorating, without extended periods of cold weather.

Wenatchee Valley, lying along the northern boundary of the county, has a much lower altitude than Kittitas, and is better adapted to fruit culture. Miller & Freer, the pioneers of Wenatchee, have long kept a trading post at the mouth of that stream, and possess an orchard that yields fruit in abundance. This finds a ready market at good prices across the mountains in Ellensburg, and in the Wenatchee Valley itself. The valley is as yet thinly settled, and good homes may be found here by industrious men upon Government land. Many of the settlers are setting out small orchards and vineyards, and the luscious peaches, grapes and apples of the Wenatchee will find a more extended market throughout that portion of the Territory.

About twenty miles from Ellensburg is Swauk Creek, a considerable mountain stream discharging into the Yakima. Here are a number of settlements nestling in the little valleys along its course, and some five miles up the stream from where it is first approached by the road from Ellensburg are the Swauk placer mines. The coarse gold of these mines is their distinguishing feature. Lumps and nuggets are found ranging from one dollar to seven hundred. Considerable gold has been taken out, but the diggings are deep and the gold irregularly distributed, rendering it difficult to follow the lead. The mines are worked by a few white men and a number of Chinamen. Several quartz ledges of much promise have been discovered and are being prospected. A mill has been erected. Fifteen miles further into the mountains are the well-known quartz mines of Peshastin and Nigger creeks, which were first worked in 1861 and abandoned in the stampede for the mines of Idaho. Of late years several rich veins of ore have been worked by arastras, and the Schaffer mine has a six-stamp mill running on good rock. This mine has been developed without the aid of outside capital, and has been to unusual expense in making roads and bringing in machinery.

Directly westward from the Swauk settlements are to be found many homes on the plateaus and slopes bordering the Teanaway, and still further west in the valley of the upper Yakima. Here is a large area of cultivable