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ASHLAND AND ROGUE RIVER VALLEY.



WHAT is known by the general name of Rogue river valley, in Southern Oregon, includes much more than the strip of country which lies immediately along the banks of the stream that gives its name to the region. Spurs from the

Siskiyou mountains to the south, the Cascades to the east and the Umpquas on the north traverse the section in all directions, and the many tributaries of the Rogue river drain valleys having a large aggregate area, some of them being nearly fifty miles long and several miles in width. These valleys radiate from Rogue river, toward which they all tend, and, while they present many varieties of soil and surface, they are all of a semi-tropical nature and are particularly adapted to the production of fruit.

One of the most important sections of the Rogue river country is the valley of Bear creek, a stream which rises in the Siskiyou mountains near the California boundary and joins Rogue river about fifty miles to the northward. The valley of Bear creek is more than forty miles long and of an average width of about twelve miles. It extends northwest and southeast and is bounded by spurs of the Siskiyou and the Cascades. It is one of the most charming little valleys in the west, and is reaching a high state of development in every direction.

Some thirty miles above its mouth Bear creek is joined by Ashland creek, from the south, which takes its rise from the melting snows of Ashland butte, a snow peak reaching an altitude of nearly eight thousand feet. During the dry season Ashland creek always has a good volume of water, while Bear creek, above its confluence with the Ashland, sometimes goes dry. On Ashland creek, a short distance from its mouth, is situated the city of Ashland, from which the stream derives its name. This is much the largest city in the Rogue river country. It has a population

of about three thousand souls, and is in every sense a flourishing town.

About the year 1851 a party of men from Ashland, Ohio, erected a small saw mill on the present site of the city of Ashland, Oregon. That mill and, possibly, a small house or two built at the same time, constituted the first settlement of the valley. In 1854 the flouring mill, that with greatly improved machinery still grinds away at the old stand, was erected. Then a few lots were laid off near the mill and business houses were erected. Gradually the plat was added to until it assumed the air of a city, and all the time settlers were locating in the country about the town and reducing the fertile valley to a rich garden. But in the absence of railroad communication the growth of that section was necessarily slow, and in 1885, when it was incorporated as a city, it had a population of less than a thousand. For many years Ashland was reached only by stage routes hundreds of miles long overland, or from the sea coast at the mouth of Rogue river, where coasting vessels sometimes landed. Then for some years the long gap in the railroad between Portland and San Francisco, from Roseburg, one hundred and forty miles to the northward, to Redding, in California, one hundred and sixty miles south of Ashland, made a wearisome stage journey of three hundred miles necessary between the two railroads. Ashland was always the most important point in the valley, but that counted for little when it was so inaccessible. A year ago last December the two ends of the railway met in the mountains near Ashland and a continuous rail route between the two large cities of the Pacific coast was established. The historic mountain stages disappeared from the scene, and the thrilling stage journey over the Siskiyou is now only a memory.

For some time previous to the establishment of through rail connections Ashland had the benefit of the line to Portland, and from the advent of the railroad dates a new era for that country. The changing