

ARCHÆOLOGY OF OREGON CITY.

LOCAL evidences are abundant to prove that Oregon City was for many generations the commercial and fighting center of the autochthones.

Close to the mouth of Abernethy creek there was a permanent village of considerable size. The refuse found there leaves no doubt of this. In the river bank back of Mr. Glasspool's residence, ten feet from the surface, a half inch seam of charcoal is found every three or four inches upward for eight feet. On the edge of Abernethy creek all the seams slope into one seam six feet thick. These layers of charcoal contain an abundance of human bones and of large and small game, and vertebrae of fish. Over all these deposits lie two feet of vegetable chocolate-colored mould mixed with sand. In the face of the opposite bank, directly across, like deep traces of refuse and charcoal are found, indicative of long human habitation. Unless there were overflows, the superficial layer of soil must have been a long time forming, indicating that the noble siwash rarely, but sometimes, shifted the habitat of his dried salmon and tribal gods, and probably the shift was made either because the gods became frenzied with anger, or because the villages were wiped out by the war-club and the fagot. Floods, no doubt, sometimes drove them away.

The most unmistakable evidence of the prosperity of barbarism at this point is the vast deposit of arrow heads found on the low river bank a short distance north of the mouth of Abernethy creek. Here about 130,000 perfect arrow heads have been found and 200,000 imperfect and broken ones, and enough specimens of rock of which the arrows were made, beside flakings, are remaining to macadamize a road a mile. Near the Dalles, on the Columbia, also very perfect specimens of arrow points have been found. The deposits of Abernethy creek naturally make a bank at its mouth in the bed of the Willamette, and it is said that on account of the shallows thus produced, there the river was usually forded by the Indians. It was a spot of strategic importance, and battles would occur here oftener than elsewhere. This fact may partially account for the large number of arrow points found.

In Canemah, at a low spot on the eastern bank, a half mile above the falls, about 10,000 arrow heads were found, but no flakings of manufacture, and where the locks were built, on the west shore of the Willamette, many thousands were scattered about, and an abundance of flakings, as though here had been a political armory of the red men—but they are covered by twenty feet of dump from the excavation of the canal. Archaeologists express the opinion that the arrow heads found around Oregon City are superior to any found elsewhere in the United States, excelling in

beauty and finish. They were made of clear and opaque obsidian, red, yellow and green jasper, carnelian, chalcedony, gray quartz, petrified, agatized and opalized wood and slate, but the majority found are of quartz and obsidian. The "raw" material was picked up here and there on the mountains and plains by the Indians. Most of the arrow points are barbed on both sides, but some only on one side, and some are two-pointed.

An examination of the beautiful and valuable museum of rare and unique arrow points and other stone implements of Indian manufacture, collected by H. E. Stevens, of this city, surprises and delights one. The collection is the finest on the Pacific coast, and, doubtless, the choicest in the world, as in this region only such perfect specimens have been found. The workmanship on these arrow points is exquisite, and could be imitated by no one—in fact, their manufacture is a lost art. The barbs on the light obsidian points, that were intended to rip and tear a path through the flesh, are so small and delicate that it does not seem possible to cut them without the aid of a microscope. What wooden or stone tools did the wildwood artists use? The oldest siwash in this camp, Chief Sapsucker, who claims he has lived on dog salmon for more than a hundred years, promised Mr. Stevens that he would make a few, but a few days' work resulted in only wretched abortions. He did not know how.

Some who have given this subject considerable thought are of opinion that many hundreds of years have elapsed since the Indians used stone arrow heads, and that at the time the white man appeared they used bone arrow heads. As one ground for their opinion they cite the following discovery of five remarkable skulls. At the time of the June high water in 1887 the river bank at Green Point was washed away, exposing five human skeletons. They were lying under the six foot bed of charcoal alluded to at the beginning of this article, eight feet below the surface. The skulls alone being of anatomical interest, three of these were saved, the other two crumbled to pieces on exposure to the atmosphere. Two of them are now at the National Museum in Washington, D. C., numbered respectively 2976 and 2977. The teeth were worn down almost to the jawbone, indicating that owners of the skulls were very old when they "slept with their fathers." The frontal developments of the skulls was so far retarded that the angle of obliquity of the retreating or flat forehead far exceeded that of any of the Flathead Indians of the present day. This characteristic and the large basic formation of the skull indicates a low order of intelligence and a prominence of the propensities of the brute. Another point of interest was that the bodies were found to have been interred in a red earth not found in this valley.—*Oregon City Courier*.