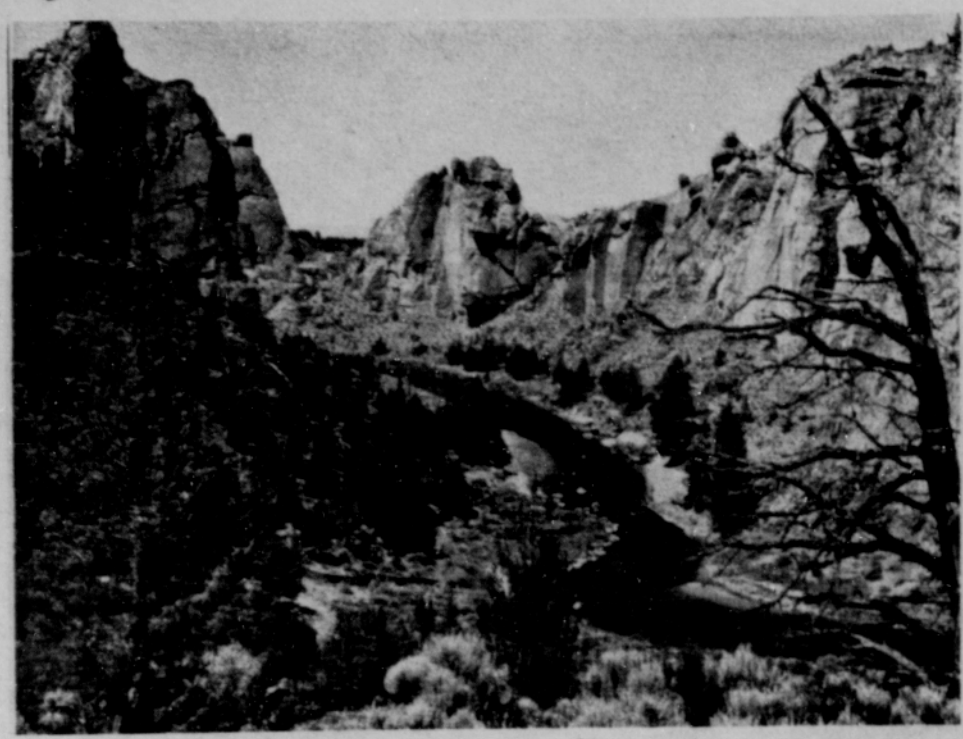

Smith Rocks in Central Oregon, just northeast of Redmond, form part of a 300 foot deep gorge sliced by the aptly named Crooked River. The multi-colored sedimentary rock can be viewed from a small picnic area or a trail leading into the canyon.

Like the Deschutes and the John Day rivers, which dominate much of Central Oregon, the Crooked River cuts a spectacular canyon through the volcanic plateaus as they wind northward toward the Columbia.

In the foreground are juniper trees which, although they are small, may be hundreds of years old and the sagebrush that grows throughout the dry eastern regions of the state.

Branding is still a commonplace event in Eastern Oregon where the huge ranches graze their cattle and horses on the open range. Shown here is a Hereford whiteface receiving his brand on a ranch near John Day.

The Old West

Eastern Oregon provides a great contrast with the western side of the Cascades, the mountains cutting off most of the rain and leaving the region dry and desert-like.

But Eastern Oregon has its own beauty — high mountains, deep canyons, interesting rock formations cut in the lava by the rivers and by the wind, areas of shifting sands, forests of juniper, and an abundance of desert lakes.

Irrigation has brought fertility to the soil and thousands of areas are cultivated, growing wheat, potatoes, peas and other crops.

The major mountain ranges are the pine covered Blue Mountains, and the Wallawas, called the "Little Alps."

Marshlands at the Malhuer Refuge and Klamath Lake provides habitat for migrating birds. Other residents include antelope, deer, bear, jack rabbits, rattle snacks, and all manners of small animals.

The major cities of Eastern Oregon are Bend, which sits at the edge of the "high desert" with the mountains of the central Cascades in view; Pendleton, in the wheat region now the Columbia, the home of the Pendleton Roundup; LaGrande and Baker, at the foot of the Blue Mountains; and in the south, Klamath Falls and Lakeview.

Willow trees border a farm meadow near Mitchell in Wheeler County with a lava topped butte in the background.

WELCOME FROM THE TRAIL BLAZERS