



Lost River-A Mountain Mystery

Strange Stream Flows Both Below And Above Surface

BY DEWITT HARRY.

RIDER HAGGARD wrote one of his greatest romances around a river that flowed underground. It is a thrilling tale of a boiling stream flowing first along the surface of the earth and then taking a sudden notion to occupy a subterranean channel. Other noted writers of fiction have used the same theme to great advantage, and in their quest for the strange and startling have not neglected to call into being great lakes and caverns under the surface of the earth, hidden from the eye of man.

All of these stories might have been written in Oregon, for in this state can be found every one of their inventions. It is not likely that many of these authors had any particular place in mind when they created this figment of their imagination, but counterparts for most of their far-fetched tales in the matter of geographical oddities readily can be located in this state. Take the tale of the Lost River, the one that plunged to darkness under a mountain range, emerging many miles away in a land totally strange from that of its origin. In this story an inhabitant of the upper reaches of this stream embarked in a small boat and safely emerged, after harrowing experiences, in a foreign land. In Oregon the Lost River has its beginning far up on the plateau east of the Cascade mountain range and fully half of its time is spent wandering below the surface of the earth.

Underground River Cautious.

At its beginning it is not unusual, a rivulet startlingly similar to many other mountain streams. But this fast-flowing traveler on its journey to the ocean develops a character all its own, for instead of staying in a normal bed like most well-behaved rivers do, it takes the bit in its own teeth and frequently goes under instead of over the great rocks that seek to make its downward path difficult. Lost River flows through some of the most startling country in this state; it is a tributary of the Mackenzie river and its waters therefore finally find their way to the ocean through the Willamette and Columbia.

Men with an intimate knowledge of their state will usually admit that on the headwaters of the Mackenzie and its reaches is located one of the greatest game countries in their experience and this means in the world. Lost river has its source far up on the side of the Three Sisters, coming down the middle divide of this great triumvirate of mountains through a series of fertile slush meadows that furnish pasture for good-sized herds of deer and elk. One of the largest elk herds known graze over this section of Oregon and the magnificent animals present one of the sights of the country, as they are fully protected by law, and reports are that they are increasing in number. The hunting in the great timber of this section is unparalleled and numberless bear are also to be found.

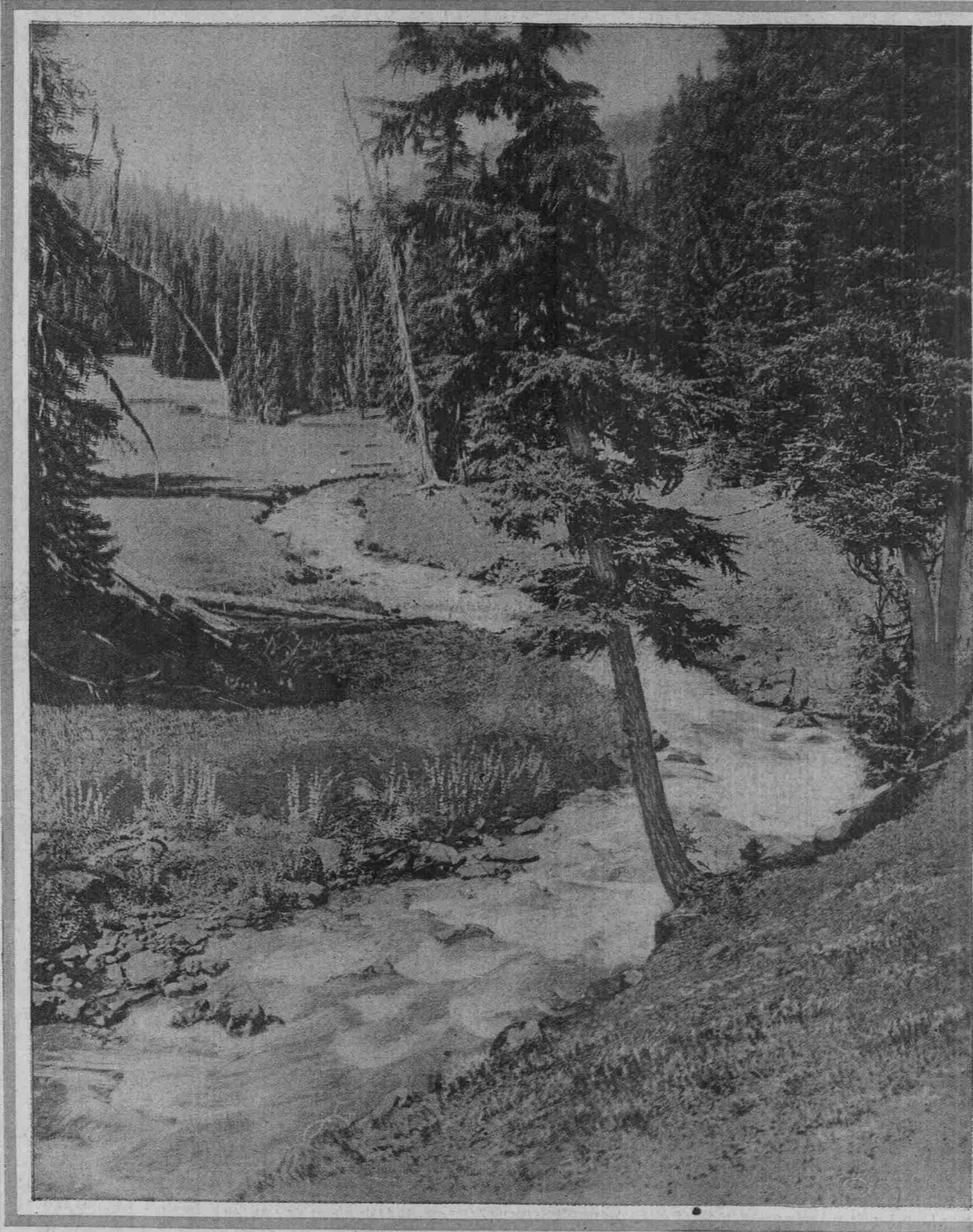
Water Heard Below Surface.

Though not many explorers have traced the entire route of Lost river to its junction with the Mackenzie the rangers on duty in that region have many tales to relate of the astonishing habit that the stream has for going into retirement. Often for several miles there is not the faintest trace of any water and few indications that there has been a flow of any size at the bottom of the valley. Then again within a few hundred yards the river will again make its appearance, larger and with more water than when it took its last dive below. At some places it can be heard as it flows along under the surface. This occurs not once but several times in a few miles and in some places the rangers are certain of the existence of large subterranean lakes. Large springs fed from some underground source occur in many places and the geological formation of the country must be greatly out of the ordinary. All through this longitudinal section of the state numberless caves have their location, the largest possible being those in Josephine county and underground streams and lakes can easily be noted.

North of Lost river are some strange formations, caves being found in the serrations that occurred when this great range of mountains was formed. Some of these caves are almost unbelievable in their extent and others have extremely odd contents. One of the most noted of these caverns is found a short distance from Bend and contains ice. Now how this is kept there in all seasons of the year is a mystery, for as far as can be ascertained there is no chemical refrigeration. The fact exists that these ice caves, and there are a number of them through the state as far south as the California boundary, seldom show any sign of melting in the hottest of summer weather. Therefore several of them located near tourist hotels are favored loafing places for the long summer days, the visitors entering when the ice is at its best and getting cooled off.

Source Likely in Great Cavern.

As the majority of the rivers in Oregon have their source in the perpetual snows of the high mountain regions it does not take too great a stretch of the imagination to figure Lost river in a similar role, only instead of starting from the exposed fields of snow and ice it might have its inception in those located underground. However this may be, the stream dives and emerges seemingly with abandon and some person who is interested in searching out occurrences of this kind will doubtless one day trace it all out. It is a strange fact that while these great mountains that go to make up one of the grand-



—Photo by Weister.

est ranges in the country seemingly present a solid appearance, their sides are sometimes pockmarked with caverns, most of them the result of volcanic action at the time the Creator was moulding the country.

Great Mountains Divided.

The country out from Eugene and east is little known, though here is located one of the greatest of natural passes to the vast interior empire of the state. Following the Mackenzie from its junction with the Willamette the traveler finds magnificent vistas opened out as the road climbs through this great natural gap in the solid mountain wall. To the south lie the Three Sisters, magnificent mountains figuring greatly in Indian lore. These three peaks, starting out of the one great base, rise to over 10,000 feet each, the southern one being the highest—10,352 feet. Mackenzie pass road is open, but it is not rated as any too desirable by men familiar with touring conditions in the state. In any event it can be traveled, as several parties have made the journey

within the last few months, among them being photographers and men searching for the beauties of Oregon and their reports are of the most glowing nature.

As a result of the visits of the authors a number of stories are appearing in national publications paying lavish tribute to the wonders of the country and this is resulting in the best of the nation getting an excellent idea of what is to be expected in the west. It is more than likely that they have as good an idea of eastern Oregon as do the people who live just a few miles west in the same state, for comparatively few of the natives of this land of wonders take the trouble to venture far off their hard-surface roads. An experienced tourist a few months ago made a strange criticism of hard-surface highways. He said that they spoiled the drivers who had learned to expect too much, and as a result stuck closely to the easily traversed sections of their state instead of emulating the pioneer spirit and seeking

to explore the other parts of their own commonwealth.

Not only is it in the matter of scenery that the eastern section of the state offers wonders, but in the matter of opportunity. It is a domain of which little is understood, sparsely settled and the mineral and other possibilities hardly scratched. Though it is not very well known at this time great enterprises are seeking for the natural wealth of the land and some startling surprises are promised within a few years in the matter of location of oil fields and other hidden mineral resources. The great forests of this country are being worked to the utmost and their product being shipped in immense quantities. This is not far from the range of mountains that rear its forbidding height as a barrier, and of which the Mackenzie pass is a portion. This pass rises to 5000 feet in its way over the range, but in eastern Oregon the plateau on which much of the country stands is nearly a mile high, the

altitude of Denver, but lacking much of its blustery winds and frigid temperature.

Donald Mackenzie Explores.

Historical associations attach themselves to most of the spots in Oregon and with most of the names given mountains, rivers and other landmarks there is some tale in connection. It is doubtful if Donald Mackenzie ever saw Lost river at the time he made his journey up the Willamette, but it seems fitting that he should be given some recognition on account of his services to the state. Relief maps of the state give some idea of this country, how the Willamette has its interior valley nesting in a fold between two great mountain ranges with the ocean to the west and yet another great valley to the east. This eastern portion of our state is so different in every way from the west, climate, altitude, forests and other characteristics, that it would seem to man another land.

Mackenzie was one of those first men in this country who visited its innermost points.

Early in the 19th century John Jacob Astor of New York sent two parties out to explore the Pacific northwest, the Oregon country. At that time the Hudson's Bay company of gentlemen adventurers were operating in this region and had one of their posts located at Fort Vancouver. Astor was a trader and did most of his work on the frontiers of the country and was always in search of new fields. His expeditions were dispatched only after careful preparation and study of the country and every man of them was hand-picked, they were the cream of the great Americans who believed that in the west lay a great empire. His policy was to have the two bodies of his men meet at a given point, and after long and careful study the mouth of the Columbia was picked. The two parties got away about the same time, but the ocean party made the best time and reached the mouth of the Columbia in 1811, establishing the city of Astoria there. The overland party found nearly insurmountable difficulties in traversing the unmapped and nearly unknown region from the Mississippi west and only arrived a year later, reaching Astoria in 1812. They found their other section established with a fort and ample protection already provided and they immediately began their barrier with the Indians. One of their duties was to explore the interior and several expeditions were sent out to do this. The overland party had been in charge of Wilson Price Hunt and Ramsey Crooks and Donald Mackenzie was one of their trusted lieutenants during the long journey. He proved to be a daring and brave man of the highest type and it seemed no more than fitting that he be chosen one of the head men of the party to trace the Willamette river to its source.

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Astorians Follow Willamette.

This he did, though it is not known whether they finally reached the extreme headwaters of the Willamette but at the spot where Eugene now stands a fair-sized river emptied into the Willamette and the doubtful men of the Astor command honored their companion who had proved himself such a reliable man, by naming this stream the Mackenzie, and so it is to this day. The Mackenzie river traverses the high mountain pass that was later of great value to the newcomers to Oregon in reaching the fertile interior of the Willamette, where the first towns were located, and this pass was later named after the river. It is into it that Lost river empties after it has spent much of its time on a unique journey first above and then under the mountains. This is but one of the wonders of this great region that was first visited by the Astorians and they did not spend much of their time searching for curiosities but in a thorough mapping of the country.

Lost river and the strange ice and stalactite caverns near and below there have been discoveries of late years and what manner of other novelties are hidden in the mountains of that region will likely be made public soon. It has been a section of the state seldom visited until a very short time ago, but as the population increases as the other Americans learn of the manifold wonders to be seen here, and as the roads of the state are developed there will be more travel and more will see and be astounded. Almost the last chance to be a first-hand pioneer in this region is at hand and if some other daring Oregonian would like to have a cave or other strange discovery named after himself and go down to posterity thus honored, now is the time to get action.

SCHOOL SYSTEM IMPROVED

United States Educators Reorganizing Methods in Peru.

LIMA, Peru.—Virtually the entire educational system of Peru is now under the direction of American professors who were called here recently to complete an educational reform movement begun ten years ago.

The foreign educational experts are to develop the system, from the primary grades to the university, in accordance with the special needs of each section of the country.

Doctor Harry Erwin Bard, formerly secretary of the Pan-American Society of the United States and formerly connected with the Philippine educational mission, was chosen by President Leguia to direct the reorganization. Doctor Bard has been appointed general of education and under him are more than 20 American professors.

The country has been divided into three regions. The regional directors are John K. Bredin of South Carolina, William W. Andrews of Massachusetts and Glenn L. Catkins of Washington. F. B. Spaulding of Vermont is director of libraries, L. M. Wilson of Illinois is director of examinations and studies and F. L. Crane, formerly director of the Philippine school system, is director of school house construction. A new university called the University of Technical Schools has been created. Its branches are engineering, agriculture, pedagogical sciences, industrial arts and commerce. The last three branches are respectively under the direction of H. G. Lull of Kansas, E. C. Phillips and Dr. William E. Dunn, formerly of the University of Texas.

Fourteen other American professors have been distributed among the secondary colleges.