

THE OREGON HERALD.

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HARNEY VALLEY.

ITS DESCRIPTION, HISTORY, AND FUTURE PROSPECTS.

If the reader is a friend to the early settlement of the Harney country, let him send a copy of this issue of THE HERALD to relatives, friends and acquaintances in the East.

Harney Valley is a beautifully situated valley in Harney county in East Oregon, between 118 and 120 degrees West longitude from Greenwich, and between 43 and 44 degrees North latitude; is between 3,500 to 3,800 feet above the level of the sea; embraces an area of 2,400 square miles, or 1,536,000 square acres, bounded on every side by mountain ranges and lofty elevations, and is an almost entirely level plain, plentifully watered by the Silvies and Blitzen rivers and their tributaries.

The Harney country which embraces the valley of that name and the contiguous valleys of Happy, Diamond, Silvies, Silver creek, Catlow, etc., was named in honor of U. S. General Harney, of Missouri, in 1853, who while escorting emigrants through this valley had a brush with the Indians, and the valley was named in his honor—by whom we have not yet learned.

The Silvies river has its source in the spurs of the Blue mountains, south of the John Day river, flows a general southerly course, passing down the center of the valley, and empties into Lakes Harney and Malheur. It is a rapidly flowing stream, about 80 miles long, and contains every kind of fish, including the salmon trout, and other varieties of game fish. It derives its name from a Canadian trapper named Silvies, who was killed in an early day.

The Dunder-and-Blitzen river, or "Blitzen," as it is shortened by common usage, is about 50 miles in length, flows in a northerly direction and empties into the lakes, and obtained its unique name in memory of an exclamation of a Dutch soldier, in Gen. Crook's command, while standing guard over the pack animals during a vivid thunder storm, in 1865-68.

These rivers and their numerous tributaries have their water sheds within the county, and the lakes having no outlet, serve to furnish subterranean irrigation to the whole valley.

Lakes Harney and Malheur, cover an area of more than 150 square miles, and are connected by a channel about 20 yards wide and 200 yards long. They receive the waters of both Silvies and Blitzen rivers, but have no outlet and never overflow. Being situated on a level plain, and having low shores, these lakes have not such picturesque scenery as Crater Lake to recommend them to tourists, but their value to farmers is inestimable.

Right here, however, permit us to mention a natural attraction possessed by lands adjacent to these lakes that will draw hundreds of excursionists from the East in the near future: Standing in the doorway of farm houses about sunrise, distant objects, towns, farms, mountain peaks, and bands of cattle and horses grazing on the ranges, are pictured on the atmosphere and rise up from the ground like magic; and these white representations are so truly drawn, that a member of a family living several miles away from home, can distinguish the persons of the family as they walk about the yard; brother from father, or mother from sister.

The Lake of Harney was probably so called because it was in the Harney country, and Malheur after one of the tribes of Indians that hunted annually in its vicinity. Severe drought during 1889, these lakes lakes are lower than ever before known by white settlers.

Soil and climate are an exact counterpart of that of Umatilla co., Ore., the best wheat-raising county in the State. Very little has been done towards wheat-raising here, but those have been successful that have tried it. Umatilla on account of the drought of 1889, averaged from 10 to 20 bushels per acre on many grain ranches. The same can be said of this section. THE EAST OREGON HERALD has in its office fine specimens of grain from all over the county, for the years 1888 and 1889.

Wheat finds a ready home market at 5 cents a pound—\$3 per bushel. Oats and barley grow equally well, and bring 3 and 4 cents per pound. Alfalfa and red clover grow luxuriantly; timothy and red-top thrive finely. Pasturage is excellent; natural grass grows abundant, and is cut for hay that sells at \$12 and \$15 per ton in the winter time. All cereal crops thrive without irrigation.

In winter the weather is cold but pleasant, the usual effects of altitude being checked by the gentle chinook, or west wind. The snowfall is sufficient to preserve wheat and supply moisture that is not furnished by rains. In summer there is a pleasant breeze constantly blowing, which tends to keep agreeable weather, no matter how hot the sun's rays, and the nights cool enough to make covering desirable—in fact one can sleep under cover comfortably the year round.

There is no timber except along water courses, where there is a slight growth of birch and usually large, heavy growth of willows. But the adjacent mountains are timbered with fir, pine, juniper, mountain-mahogany, etc. Saw-mills are located in the pines, and the lumber of the best quality, sells much cheaper than in the East.

Garden vegetables are large, finely flavored, abundant and easily raised. We will on application give the addresses of several gardeners here, who will answer in detail all inquiries on that subject; the white, or Irish potato is grown with little cultivation, and is superior to that grown in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Tennessee, or Kansas, we personally know as regards size, "mealiness," and flavor.

Small fruits, such as strawberries, currants, blackberries, gooseberries, grapes, etc., will from what evidence we have been able to gather the past two years, be a success, as native plants are hardy and good bearers. Fruit trees and ornamental shrubs were planted freely by farmers in the spring; the fall settings survived the severest winter (1888) that East Oregon has ever known. Large orders have been made on the Bloomington Nursery for fall planting in 1889; the result is in the future.

As an agricultural region it will be readily seen that its inducements are rarely excelled. As to stock raising it cannot be surpassed, since its water, grass, and salubrious climate take horses, cattle, sheep and hogs throughout the year (from January 1 to December 31) without grain, or any other than wild grass feeding, and when the winter is milder than common, stock looks better in early spring than in Eastern localities where they are grain-fed during the winter; and the texture and flavor of the meats compare favorably with the best in the market. There is no room for large stock-raisers, as the territory is fully taken up by three or four firms that hold all available ranges, but the stock such as is commonly raised by farmers, will do well.

POPULATION. As mentioned in another paragraph, the earliest period known regarding this country, is 1853, when Gen. Harney was guarding the passage of emigrants to the Coast. Some time in the sixties we learn that Abner Robbins, now of Drewsey, used to ride on pack-horses among the Indians before any white men resided here.

Next is in August, 1865, when Point Wright was named in honor Gen. Wright, who went down in the "Brother Jonathan" the preceding spring, and establishment of Camp Wright in September of that year, by Capt. L. L. Williams of Co. "H," 1st Oregon Infantry, in command of parts of three companies stationed on the ground near the present site of J. S. Devine's residence.

In Sept. 1865, there was a fight between the Indians (Harney Valley Putes), and a part of the force under Capt. Williams, between Camp Wright and Harney lake, wounding a soldier named Smith in the foot, and another named Griffin, who in after years died from the effects of the injury. That same evening the Indians set fire to the tall grass [a man named Keiger describes the grass of the valley "high enough for me to tie over my head as I ride through it on horse-back"] and Capt. Williams and his men had to take refuge on a grease wood knoll—some-where about the Bucaroo house of the Divine ranch of to-day—en passant, two old time shot guns were found in the willows in that vicinity, a couple of years since.

At about the same time Lieut. Applegate of Co. "H," in command of a part of Capt. Williams' force was returning from Camp Curry, to Camp Wright, was that evening attacked by the Indians at fortifications thrown up on what is now the McGee ranch and called for fun after one of the company, Fort Drellenger. And again, the next morning, about eight miles south of the present town of Burns, the Indians shooting from the point of their rimrock west of the cove.

The Putes were under command of a Chief Wahweveh, brother of old Chief Paulina, whom Howard Maupin, an old Mexican soldier, killed on Crooked river in 1867; he turned Camp Wright some time

afterward, and died years ago at Steen mountain. The Malheur chief Egan was also in command of the turbulent reds. The defunct town south of Burns was named in honor of his memory.

The grave of a soldier known as "Reddy," is in front of the remains of Camp Wright, who was shot by Indians, while in camp on the Blitzen, as he mounted guard one dark night in February, 1866.

The winter of 67-68 the Indians surrendered to Gen. Crook on the site of the old Malheur agency.

The attention of small stock-raisers was turned to this section about this time, and Camp Harney was established as a military post, a man named Walker carrying the mail on horseback between the Post and Canyon City. The following is a short sketch of the early settlement of Harney valley, as we have been able to learn it:

1872—Stille Riddle, John Boone, the Smyth family, and John Chapman, came in with stock.

1873—J. S. Miller, J. Cooksey, T. Prather and the Venators brought in cattle and horses. Jas. Sheppard, and the Currys brought in stock.

1874—P. F. Stenger, and Thos. Whiting brought stock in from Douglas county, Oregon. P. F. Stenger establishing his camp at what is known as the Sod House on the Blitzen, afterward removing to the present Peter Clemens ranch, where Riddle & Boone had camped two years before, and Whiting at Rocky Point the present site of Burns. Mail route from Canyon City via Camp Harney to Fort McDermitt, Nevada, was established.

1879—The Smyths, father and son, killed by the Indians, at the close of the trouble with the Putes and Bannocs. The Bannoc warfare ceased. The first merchandise store and saloon put up by a man named Josephson, and kept where the Burns hotel now stands.

1878—Wm. Curry bought and moved the Josephson stock to where the Levens Bros. ranch is located. Daniel Wheeler, the first Justice of the Peace.

1879-80—The military post at Camp Harney abandoned. Large stockmen began buying out the smaller dealers.

1881—P. M. Curry, now of Lakeview, Or., came here, for whom Curry precinct is named.

1882—Geo. McGowan, the Martins and A. O. Bedell located. Egan Postoffice was established.

1882—McGowan & Martin opened general merchandizing store in Egan and the next year P. F. Stenger bought out Martin's interest and moved the store to the site of the present town of Burns.

1883—Geo. McGowan named the new postoffice to be in the McGowan & Stenger store "Burns," in honor of Robert Burns, Scotland's famous bard.

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- DR. PRICES'.....
- SNOW FLAKE (Graft).....
- CONGRESS.....
- HECKER'S.....
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The Royal Baking Powder is purest in quality and highest in strength of any baking powder of which I have knowledge. WM. McMURTRIE, Ph. D.

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T. V. B. EMBREE, M. D. Office at his residence, on the east side of 21st Street, near the corner of Burns.

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Prepared to do all kinds of Work in the Blacksmith line. Horse Shoeing at \$2.50 per head. BUGGIES, WAGONS, ETC., MADE TO ORDER WITH SEATNESS, AND OF GOOD QUALITY. ALL WORK WARRANTED.

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