

**DECLINE OF
PLACER CAMPS.**

**Their Lives Are Always of
Short Duration.**

The following editorial in the Spokesman-Review describes the conditions in eastern Oregon:

The early history of Idaho is repeated in Alaska. In 1863, 40,000 gold seekers were drawn to the rich placer camps of Idaho. Bancroft says that notwithstanding the falling off in eastern immigration, the Boise mines alone drew between 25,000 and 30,000 men to southern Idaho. These figures about cover the highest estimates of the number of men who will go into Alaska this year.

In those days, as now, there was keen rivalry between town and cities over the trade of the placer camps. Portland, Walla Walla, Lewiston, Umatilla landing, and even Sacramento, California, competed for the business of the various camps in northern and southern Idaho. Lewiston was a lively place. It commanded the rich diggings of northern Idaho, and its ambitious merchants had dreams of reaching out for the richer trade of the Boise country. They dispatched a party to old Fort Boise to ascertain if it were practicable to navigate Snake river from Lewiston to that point or beyond. This party, after waiting until the river was near its lowest stage, descended from Fort Boise to Lewiston on a raft. "It was soon made apparent, however," says the historian, "that Lewiston was hopelessly cut off from Salt Lake, and even from Boise Basin, by craggy mountains and impassable river canyons and falls."

As readily as one rich camp was exhausted, another was found, and the mercurial miners darted hither and thither like globules of quicksilver in search of gold. For a few years the new discoveries overbalanced the exhaustion of the old diggings and the population increased rapidly; but there came a time when the balance turned, and then the country lost its transient population nearly as fast as it had gained it in the eldorado days.

Thus now with Alaska. Dawson has lost the greater part of its population, and even now has the appearance of a deserted mining camp. In a few years, at furthest, the same fate will fall on Cape Nome, and in a few more years, the thousands who are now gathering in Alaska will scatter to the four winds. This has been the history of California, of the placer camps of Australia, and of the once famous camps of Idaho. Alaska's industries will then fall back on its permanent resources—its quartz mines, if commercial ore shall be discovered, and its fisheries and lumber.

It is significant, though, that thus far pay ore has eluded the Alaska searcher. The Treadwell mill is still pounding away on great bodies of low grade ore on the seashore, but that is apart from the present rush of gold seekers. Nothing that would invite the operations of the experienced and prudent quartz miner has been found in the interior.

In this respect Alaska differs from the early history of Idaho. Even when the placer miners were washing out their millions, primitive means were rigged up to crush the rich ore of adjacent ledges. "At South Boise, in 1864, between forty and fifty arastras were run by water power, making flattering returns, and the number soon increased to eighty-four, each crushing about a ton a day. In the same year quartz mills were brought in from St. Louis, San Francisco and Portland, and Idaho fairly entered on the development of her remarkable quartz mines.

Haul Ore from the Badger to Susanville.

It was ascertained Thursday that it is more than probable that the Badger Gold Mining company, whose property is about three and a half miles from Susanville, on Elk creek, will this summer haul their ore from the mine to Pendleton and then ship to San Francisco, instead of hauling to Baker City. Last year this company had thirty-three teams engaged in hauling ore to the latter place. It is understood that arrangements are about completed with the First National bank of this city to take care of their interests at this point. The only drawbacks to Pendleton in the past have been the condition of the road and the need of a bridge across the middle fork of the John Day river. The bridge across the river was put in last winter and Granite has undertaken to put the road in condition. Thus it seems that nothing now remains to prevent the ore coming this way. Charles J. Baker, of Pendleton, expects to enter into a contract with the company to put on four or five six-horse teams to do a portion of this hauling.—Pendleton Tribune.

REVIVAL IN THE JOHN DAY.

**Quartz Mining Superceding Famous Old
Placer Diggings.**

The snow is rapidly disappearing from the mountains and the foothills are almost alive with prospectors. Attention has been generally turned from the placer diggings to the quartz ledges, and the searchers are aiming for the bodies of gold ore that have been found to be characteristic of the belt. This John Day valley is an interesting country, and many a romance and tragedy is recorded in its history. The discovery of rich placers brought an adventurous and hardy people to its fields in the early '60s. Then little or no attention was paid to the quartz deposits, the creeks being easy to work and yielding rich returns. Now, however, with the aid of modern machinery, ledges are desired and searched for.

As a result of the new life that has come into the district, Prairie City, the sleepy little hamlet of yesterday, is today a bustling town with all the modern spirit but the old habiliments. Building has, however, already started, and there is a general revival. New businesses are being opened and there is room for more and need for many things, including sawmills, shingle mills and factories. The resources of the valley are not confined to mining, as there are timber, grain, grazing and fruit lands.

The John Day valley is six or seven miles wide and fifteen miles long. On the south side of the river are the Strawberry mountains and on the north the Dixie Butte and another range. The whole country seems rich in copper, gold and silver, and all the land of the valley is fertile.

To illustrate the immensity of the deposits, the Oregon Wonder, may be mentioned. The ledge is over 1400 feet wide and has been traced for many miles. The rock is soft, and therefore easily mined. Narrow stringers are frequently found that are of great richness, and experience has shown that they gain width with depth.

From the Greenhorn mountains south through the Strawberry mountains is a belt 50 miles wide and 150 miles long, much of which has never been prospected. It is therefore practically a virgin field, and yet every indication points to its being a highly mineralized belt. This will probably be one of the several new sections that will be explored this season.—Special to the Spokesman-Review from Prairie City.

Notice.

Notice is hereby given that I am not a candidate for the office of Supervisor of roads of the Sumpter district, and I desire that my name be withdrawn from the republican ticket. Signed: GEO. B. TEDROWE. Sumpter, Oregon, May 9, 1900.

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**W. S. BOWERS
ABSTRACTS**

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