

## JOHN DAY FOSSILS.

Scientists Now Exploring  
These Deposits.

Dr. John C. Merriam, of the University of California, was in Portland yesterday on his way to the John Day valley, where he will spend the next six weeks hunting for fossils in the famous rattlesnake beds of that district. He will be accompanied by Professor T. H. Knowlton, of the United States geological survey, who expects to meet him at The Dalles tomorrow.

This is Professor Knowlton's first trip to the John Day country, but Dr. Merriam has visited it twice before. This year the expedition was organized by Professor Knowlton, who is interested in collecting the leaves of fossil plants, in which line of work he is an expert. Many species of the sequoia are to be found there, not the gigantic, but related species; together with hemlock leaves and extinct ferns, all of which are in the tertiary formation. Last year a fossil flower was discovered, which was a rare treasure indeed.

Dr. Merriam expects to find early forms of the horse and mastodon, also species of the deer and camel, which, strangely enough used to range over the hills of eastern Oregon, together with elephants, gigantic cattle, compared with which our Texas steers would seem quite diminutive, and a great sloth, a grotesque creature entirely different from any beast now living.

Last Summer Dr. Merriam was fortunate enough to discover the finest fossil of the extinct horse that is known. This is three-toed. In constantly standing or running on the longest or middle toes, this ancient horse, which was in size only as large as a sheep, obtained from his limbs the highest possible degree of elasticity and speed, and at the same time lost the use of the side digits, developing the one-toed type of foot which we find in his living relatives. This at least is Dr. Merriam's theory.

The giants of the John Day beds are the huge clothes, which are related to the living hog, and rank among the largest known mammals. The University of California has a specimen, found at Bridge creek, the skull of which measures 30 inches in length, and this is by no means so large as other clothes that once roamed over the John day valley. These must have attained a length of over 10 feet and a height of six or seven feet. It seems odd that these Miocene bears should have disappeared entirely from the face of the earth, without leaving any direct descendants, when they were so well able to defend themselves in the struggle for existence.

Dr. Merriam has given the name "Picture Gorge" to a great canyon, the most magnificent of all those that are to be found in the valley. It is below Dayville, and in the mouth of the canyon are peculiar paintings on the face of the basaltic rock, the work of an unknown tribe. These pictures are in red against a black background of rock, and represent men, strange forms of animals never seen before by living man. That one which most impressed Dr. Merriam was a queer beast that looked like a salamander, with a plainly marked hammer on the end of its tail. Another one seemed to be an odd combination of the paragraph sign and the dollar mark sign. Professor Putnam, the great anthropologist, who, in addition to holding a chair at Harvard, is curator of the American museum of New York, saw some of these pictures in Dr. Merriam's office at Berkeley, and was greatly interested in them. No description of them has ever

yet appeared in print, nor of the gorge itself, although this is a subject of great interest to the geologist as well as to the anthropologist.

Upon being asked for his opinion as to the origin of the men who drew these pictures, Dr. Merriam replied that it was a question not yet definitely decided, whether or not these Indians came from eastern Asia, or are descendants of Paleolithic men, those of the stone age, the earliest known with but one exception. Remains of these ancient Paleolithic men are found scattered over Europe, particularly Belgium and France; also in Asia (India), and possibly northern Africa. With their bones are always found flint implements. The theory for believing that the American Indian is descended from the Paleolithic man rests mainly upon the fact that flint instruments of much the same type as those in Europe have been found here. These differ slightly in form, but this has been ascribed largely to a difference in the material. The Paleolithic man had a receding chin and forehead, and a small brain. He had peculiarly large and strong back teeth, which corresponded to our wisdom teeth, but probably appeared earlier, whereas ours show a tendency to come later and later in life, or not at all.

This Paleolithic man, as said before, is the earliest known form of man with but one exception, one found in the Island of Java—*Pithecanthropus erectus*—which some maintain is a man, others an ape. He is evidently closely related to the Paleolithic man.

Dr. Merriam has asked the party from the University of California, now working in Fossil Lake, in southern central Oregon, to keep a sharp lookout for any fossils that might prove to be companion pieces to the famous Calaveras county skull of Bret Harte's funny poem. This skull, it will be remembered, was found, with implements, in strata that are older than that from which the Java man was found; but the skull is of quite recent type, with high forehead and implements like those now in use among Indians. If this Calaveras county skull can only be proved to be authentic, then California will have the oldest man in the world.—Oregonian.

## Blind Ledge Near the Ibx.

Groesbeck Bros., of Salt Lake, who were staked by M. L. Causey and Christoffersen Bros., have struck a very fine ledge near the Ibx group of mines in Grant county. The ledge was a blind ledge and was found by making open cuts through the loam and loose rock on the ledge. The ore has not been tested yet as to the value. The ledge itself, makes a very fine appearance, being over 20 feet across. Groesbeck Bros. express themselves as being well satisfied to quit prospecting and go to developing. They are practical prospectors, having located some of the richest mines in Utah. Mr. Causey left this morning for that section to examine his find.—La Grande Chronicle.

## Attention Troop B, O. N. G.

All of the equipment belonging to Troop B, O. N. G., must be turned in to Quartermaster Sergeant Gray and placed in the armory on or before the 20th day of July, 1901, and any person having equipment in his possession after that date will be prosecuted. By order of  
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