

AREA AND RESOURCES.

The Territory of Idaho was organized in 1863, from that portion of Washington lying east of the 117th degree of longitude and west of the Rocky Mountains, but it has been abridged by the formation of Montana and Wyoming. Now the 111th meridian forms the eastern boundary, running north from the 42d parallel until it strikes the Rocky Mountains, where it takes a north-west course along the summit of that range and of the Bitter Root Mountains to the 116th meridian, thence north to the 49th parallel of latitude, giving the eastern border a very irregular outline, and to the Territory as it appears on the map, the form of a gaiter boot. Idaho is bounded north by British Columbia and Montana, east by Montana and Wyoming, south by Utah and Nevada, and west by Oregon and Washington. Area 100,000 square miles. Population, 35,000. Assessed valuation of property in 1874, \$4,525,475. Capital, Boise City, in Ada Co. The Territory is divided into ten counties, although not all organized. The counties are Ada, Alturas, Boise, Idaho, Kootenai, Lemhi, Nez Perce, Oneida, Owyhee and Shoshone. The principal towns: Centerville, Florence, Franklin, Idaho City, Lewiston, Malad City, Placerville, Salmon and Silver City.

In general the surface of the country is mountainous, the entire region having a high elevation, rising upon the east to the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and the west resting upon the plateau of the Columbia. The Bitter Root, the Blue, and the Salmon Mountains are in the north, and the Goose Creek and Owyhee ranges in the south, with buttes and minor ranges irregularly breaking the country throughout with many valleys of greater or less extent between. The Pen d'Oreille, or Clark's Fork of the Columbia, rises in Montana and crosses the northern part of the Territory and the Snake, the great southern arm of the same stream rises in Wyoming and flows through the southern and western portion, receiving in its course the Owyhee from the south and the Salmon, Boise, Clearwater and others from the north. The Snake is navigable for a short distance in the Territory, and steamboats ply upon the Pen d'Oreille. In the narrow section of the north are three large lakes—Lake Kanikaw, fifteen miles long by two miles broad, Lake Coeur d'Alene, twenty-four miles long by two in breadth, and Lake Pen d'Oreille, thirty miles in length by five in breadth. These are beautiful sheets of clear water which flow and sparkle in the wilderness, in a region but slightly explored, unoccupied and unknown. Being on the most practicable route for the Northern Pacific Railroad, it awaits the coming of the iron horse to largely increase its busy population and to develop its hidden wealth.

Prior to the gold discoveries within its limits, Idaho was comparatively unknown to the whites. The first discovery occurred in 1852, on the banks of the Pen d'Oreille River, but apparently attracted little if any attention until the discovery of the Oro Fino mines in 1860, since which time a numerous population has accumulated, devoting its attention almost exclusively to the development of its mineral resources. Subsequently many rich mining districts have been found, some of which, however, were soon exhausted. The principal districts now remaining are the Owyhee mines, in the neighborhood of Silver City and Boise Basin, situated in Boise County, the most extensive placer district in the whole Territory. Rich and valuable gold-bearing quartz ledges have been discovered there, and annually contribute largely to the Territorial wealth. The ledges in the Owyhee district contains both gold and silver, the latter description predominating. The gold and silver product of Idaho in 1874 was \$3,000,000.

The whole Territory is well watered by innumerable streams, the principal one being that of the Snake River, which courses in a semi-circle through its center, and flowing north along its western boundary until it joins the Columbia River. It is a large but mostly unnavigable stream (the head of steamboat navigation being located at Lewiston) flowing through a series of impassable cañons. Several falls occur during its progress through the interior, the principal ones being those of the Salmon and Shoshone. The former are only about twenty feet in height, and are most remarkable, on account of their forming an impassable barrier to the further progress of salmon up the stream, which makes it a favorite Indian fishing place. The Shoshone Falls make an unbroken descent of about two hundred feet, being about three hundred yards wide in the narrowest part. A few miles below these the river takes another leap of one hundred and sixty feet. These, with the great wild river, the deep and rocky cañons, and the desolate region surrounding, give to the whole a scene of romantic grandeur unsurpassed in any portion of the world.

While Idaho is regarded chiefly as a mining Territory, agriculture and grazing contend for equal rank. Many of the valleys are fertile and productive, and the hills are often covered with nutritious grasses. In the valleys contributory to the Owyhee is much good land, capable of producing all kinds of cereals, and many thousand cattle fatten upon the pasturage on the hills.

The valley of the Weiser contains about 200,000 acres of superior arable land, which is now being rapidly settled upon by an industrious class of farmers. Large game abounds in this district. The Boise and Payette valleys possess extensive lands of exceeding fertility, the average yield of grain produced being estimated at about forty bushels per acre. Bear Lake Valley, a Mormon settlement of about 7,000 inhabitants, situated in the southern extremity of the Territory, is in a high state of cultivation, and the farmers are generally in a very flourishing condition. Thousands of horned cattle, horses and sheep, roam on the surrounding hill-sides, fattening upon the luxuriant and nutritious herbage with which they are clothed. Extensive agricultural lands also exist in the northern portion of the Territory, of which Camas Prairie, the oldest settled region in Idaho, contains thousands of acres of land having an exceedingly fertile and prolific soil. The Bruneau Valley, which occupies a well-sheltered position, and possesses a comparatively mild climate throughout the year, and also contains an unlimited extent of excellent pasturage, and is a common wintering place for stock, thousands being driven to it for that purpose every fall. Much of the great plain through which the Snake River, the principal stream in the Territory, winds its way is, however, a vast, barren and inhospitable sage desert, having apparently been the immense receptacle of the outpourings of refuse from surrounding volcanoes now inactive, but the valleys about its head waters, and others of smaller area along its course, are arable and lovely, and particularly inviting to occupation.

Society throughout the Territory is good, the bold and enterprising pioneers who settle the western mining regions being intent on progress, permit neither the disorderly nor vagrant to rule, and thus the rights of property are maintained, and good order and obedience to law are enforced. Large capital being required in mining operations, frequent inter-communication with the great metropolitan centers of business is necessary, and as a consequence, the refinement of the cities is familiar to the mining towns of the distant interior. Church spires point the devout to heaven, as gracefully as from the quiet New England village. Courts are held with ability and dignity, and a generous school fund maintains a noble system of public schools. In 1874 there were 4,010 school children in the Territory; seventy-seven organized school districts; fifty-three school houses, and three school libraries. The school fund amounted to \$24,576, and \$21,789 were expended for school purposes.

In no section of the world can a healthier climate be found. Being a mountainous region and well drained, it is free from miasma, and the water is pure and cold. The summers are warm and pleasant, with occasional thunder showers, but storms are infrequent. The winter is the season for rain and snow. The cold is quite severe, the season of 1874-75 being an exceptionally cold one, during which nearly a fourth of the stock left to range uncared for perished from the exposure. Sheltering and feeding cattle in winter has not been found necessary in ordinary seasons, from which fact the general mildness of the weather may be inferred.