

The Land of the Flatheads

ALL ABOUT THE INDIAN RESERVATION SOON TO BE OPENED

Uncle Sam's Land Lottery—Twenty Million Dollars Worth of Farms in 5,000 Big Prizes—The Rush to Kalispell—All About The Country, Its Climate and Soil—The Flathead Indians—A Look at Flathead Lake and the Hot Springs—Farms Where the Indians Raise Buffaloes for Profit—Some Western Stories.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

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KALISPELL, Mont.—I have come to Kalispell to tell you something about the land of the Flatheads. This great Indian reservation, one of the most valuable left in the United States, has just been surveyed by Uncle Sam's land officers, and the plots are now in Washington to be passed upon by the government. After they are approved the Indian commissioner will arrange as to the allotment of certain lands to the Indians and a commission will be appointed to classify the balance, after which they will be thrown open to settlers. This work will be done rapidly, but it is safe to say that it will be a year from now before the great rush to this country begins.

THE RUSH TO KALISPELL

When the lands are opened applicants will register at the two chief land offices near the reservation. One of these is at Missoula, on the Northern Pacific railway at the far south, and the other is here at Kalispell, on the Great Northern railway, within a short distance from Flathead lake and close to the upper part of the reservation, which, I am told, contains by far the best lands. The Great Northern railroad already runs from here to the head of Flathead lake, and it has secured the right of way for an extension of 30 miles skirting the eastern shores of that lake and running between it and the Mission mountains, so as to connect with the station of Dixon and the Northern Pacific on the south. This road will open up the whole eastern part of the reservation, and will make Kalispell the natural entrance to it. It will cause most of the homeseekers to come here to register, and the prospects are that there will be between 50,000 and 100,000 here at that time. The laws provide that would-be settlers must come to the nearest land office in person, and file their claims.

UNCLE SAM'S BIG LOTTERY.

The names will be set down in the order of their registration and each person will be given a number. At the end all the numbers will be put in a wheel and Uncle Sam's officials will run the lottery. Those whose numbers are first drawn will have the first chance to pick out their land and the lottery will go on until all the tracts are disposed of. Every one will have an even chance at the drawing, and the last man registered may get the first prize. This will be far better than the arrangements which prevailed at Okla-homa, where the man with the best horse and the bully with the big gun were able to outdistance or force their way into the best lands.

FIVE THOUSAND BIG PRIZES.

There will be 5,000 big prizes in the lottery. The farms given to the settlers will comprise about 800,000 acres, and there will be altogether about 5,000 quarter sections. For these the government will charge a nominal price,

and it is safe to say as soon as the land is allotted it will be worth \$25 per acre above Uncle Sam's charges. This will give each farm a value of \$4,000, or a total of \$20,000,000. Did you ever hear of such a lottery with such prizes? There is nothing like it on record.

In addition to this there will be other lands less valuable. The reservation altogether contains 1,500,000 acres, but about 300,000 of these are to be given to the Indians, and there are in addition about 500,000 acres covered with timber. There are also mineral regions and hot springs, about which will grow up a health resort; and the Pend O'Reille river, which drains Flathead lake, has an enormous fall, which will be valuable for the generation of power of all kinds.

THE PARADISE OF THE ROCKIES

The Kalispell people call this region the paradise of the Rockies. According to them it is a Garden of Eden, where the sun always shines, the crops never fail, and apples superior to that of which Eve gave Adam the one can be grown by sticking a twig in the ground. They laugh at the idea of the Flathead lands being worth only \$25 an acre, and say they will bring \$50 and upward, which is the price of good farm lands about here.

And, indeed, Flathead county is rich. I have driven for miles up and down the valley through fine farms all the way. There are big barns and comfortable homes. The land is well fenced and some of the fields contain 100 acres or more. The soil is a black loam from one to eight feet deep resting on a subsoil of clay. I am told it is as rich as guano, and the board of trade here says that it is now yielding 1,000,000 bushels of oats and 500,000 bushels of wheat every year.

ON THE RESERVATION.

The Flathead lands are said to be especially fine. They are well watered, and there are parts of them where irrigation is possible. Flathead lake, one-half of which lies in the reservation, is about 30 miles long and from eight to 16 miles wide. It now has a steamer upon it, and one can go by the Great Northern railroad to Somers and thence by boat the full length of the lake to Polson, where a stage line will take him down through the reservation



THIS FAMILY OF FLATHEADS WILL GET 560 ACRES.
One Household of Reservation Inhabitants Photographed for the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.

to Ravalli, on the Northern Pacific. The lake is noted for its pure, icy cold water. It is full of fish, and so clear that the speckled beauties can be seen swimming scores of feet below the surface. The Pend O'Reille river, which drains the lake, pours out over a succession of rapids and falls, four miles in length, furnishing an immense water power. The valley of the river is about 30 miles long and 10 miles in width. It is a level prairie intersected by four clear streams, fed by the Mission mountain range. The land is treeless, although the mountains are covered with timber.

Below the river, in the southern part of the reservation, some of the country is semi-arid, but it can be used for grazing. The slope of the country is such that the waters of the Flathead river could be conducted over it, making it one of the most valuable parts of the reservation.

THE INDIAN ALLOTMENTS.

The Indians are to have the first pick at the lands, and they will take some of the best. Many of them, however, already have farms which are fenced and improved; and it is hardly probable that they will give these up to take other tracts. The Indians likewise prefer lands with some timber upon them, and they will pass much

of the black prairie by and choose farms near the foot hills. After the reservation has been opened they will have the right to lease their lands to the whites, and will probably rent them out on 21-year contracts. After that time they can sell, and eventually all the lands will belong to the whites.

THE MOUNTAIN MARKET.

One advantage that the settlers here will have over those of other new regions will be the markets of Montana. This state is largely devoted to mining and there is a strong demand for all kinds of food crops at high prices. Timothy hay, for instance, is now selling here at \$15 or \$16 a ton, and oats bring a cent a pound. Wheat sells at extraordinary prices to the local mills, and the most of that raised is made into flour for home consumption. The remainder goes to the Pacific coast, where it is especially prized for making crackers and pastry.

THE HOT SPRINGS REGION.

This Flathead country is already a health resort. It is visited by tourists during the summer, and there are farmers who are settling here on account of the climate. The reservation has eight hot springs, which have been used by the Indians for generations to cure various diseases. As it is now, hun-

dreds of white people visit them for their health. They camp out in tents, drinking the water and bathing in it. Some of the springs are too hot for this purpose, others are heavily impregnated with sulphur and other minerals, and some are springs of boiling mud, which are said to be good for skin diseases. It is not known just how these springs will be treated in the allotment. They will probably be reserved by the government, and may be sold at auction or disposed of in some other way.

THE FLATHEAD INDIANS.

But let me tell you something about the Indians who own these lands. They are called Flatheads, but their real name is Salish. They are really of the same shape as those of other Indian tribes, and there is no evidence that they have ever flattened their heads by having them tied to boards when they were babies, as did some of the Indians of the lower Columbia river. They are really good-looking people and are especially friendly with the whites. They were well spoken of by Lewis and Clark when they made their expedition across the continent, and it is one of their boasts to say that they have never shed the blood of a white man. The Flatheads are not many in number. They have never exceeded 2,000,

and there are perhaps just about that many today. In the allotment they are to have 80 acres each, which will give every family two or three hundred acres.

WILD HORSE ISLAND AND ITS BUFFALOES.

Most of these Indians are engaged in farming. Nearly all own more or less stock, and there are several who are now raising buffaloes and cross-breeding them. There is an island in Flathead lake known as the Wild Horse Island. This is a great grazing ground for the buffalo herds. The animals are taken to it on steamers. They are loaded by means of a windlass, which gradually drags them up the gangway and on to the deck. This is no easy matter, for buffaloes are wonderfully strong, as is shown by a bull which recently thrust its horn through a six-by-six-inch guard rail while loading.

One of the largest herds of buffaloes here is owned by a man named Pablo, and the heirs of a half-breed Indian named Alard. It contains 300 buffaloes, and it is said to be the largest in the United States. It was started with six calves, which were brought across the Rockies, and added to from time to time.

RAISING BUFFALOES FOR PROFIT.

The men who have this herd have gone into a regular business of breeding buffaloes for profit, and I am told that it pays very well. The animals are wanted for the various zoological gardens and also for city parks, and good-sized ones will bring from \$250 to \$500 apiece. The animals are brought to Kalispell for shipment, and sent out by express in crates, just as prize sheep are crated for the same purpose. The Conrad estate has about 60 buffaloes, which it keeps inside fences, handling them like domestic cattle. The animals are quiet and safe enough if one does not venture near them on foot.

From these two herds Kalispell now and then gets a feast of buffalo meat. This is usually the case at Christmas, when the local butchers will buy a buffalo to kill, retailing the meat at 50 cents a pound. The meat has all the tenderness and juiciness of a well-bred shorthorn, and at the same time the flavor of the wild deer of the Rockies. In addition, the hide brings in at least a hundred dollars, and the buffalo head sells for \$60 or \$75, so that a single animal thus killed pays very well.

HALF-BRED BUFFALOES.

I have been told that these people are crossing the buffalo with domestic cattle.

I have not seen the results, and give the story as told to me. The favorite breeds for crossing are the Aberdeen Angus and Galloway, and the results are animals much like the buffaloes, with a rich, velvety black or brown fur. The skins are said to make beautiful coats, but the heads are not as valuable as those of the pure buffaloes.

ELK FARMS IN THE ROCKIES.

This whole country is a land of big game. There are moose, elk, mountain sheep, mountain goats, grizzlies and other kinds of bear, several deer, together with mountain lions and all sorts of small game. About 15 miles east of this town there are now two elk

farms, the owners of which make a business of selling elk to zoological gardens and to the members of the States. They get from \$25 to \$200 each for elk heads, and the teeth, when set as cuff buttons or charms, will often bring \$50 a pair. Each elk has two teeth of the kind desired and the teeth have a regular value in the markets. I am told the elk are easily domesticated, and that they have in some instances been trained to draw wagons and carriages. They are speedy, and would make good carriage animals were it not that they frighten the horses more than the boldest of auto-mobles.

NOT WILD NOR WOOLLY.

The eastern tenderfoot who expects to make a rush for the Flathead lands can come to this place without revolver, knife or bowie knives and they will be as safe as in any New England town, where the curfew is cried every night. This valley is largely settled with eastern people, and Kalispell is as quiet and orderly as any place of its size in Ohio, Indiana or Illinois. It is a thriving town of 6,000 souls, with good stores, fine homes and paved streets. It has a public library, a theater, churches and schools. It has electric lights and waterworks, as well as an enterprising board of trade and a lot of real estate agents who regret that the dictionary has not bigger words to express the real glories of their country and its resources.

HOW JUSTICE SMITH MADE IT.

Indeed, times have changed here since the rush which took place 35 years ago when the Great Northern came in. At that period the town was at the head of the lake. It was known as Demersville, and it boasted about 1,000 population and 75 saloons. Gambling was common, and there were all sorts of shames. Among the latter was a justice of the peace whom I shall call Smith. Judge Smith was fond of the bottle and the dollar and he made no bones of taking both on every occasion and on any pretense. At one time a stranger was shot by mistake while walking the streets, and Justice Smith was called in. The body was still warm, but Smith at once began to go through the pockets. In one of them he found a knife, a bunch of keys, and a \$20 piece and in another a pistol. As he raised the latter he straightened up and exclaimed:

"Why, what is this? 'Carrying concealed weapons! That is contrary to law. As justice of the peace I fine the man \$20." And he thereupon put the coin in his pocket.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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Men's 25c Suspenders 29c
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at three for 25c
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for 19c
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\$20.00 Suits at 13.50
\$22.50 Suits at 15.00
\$25.00 Suits at 16.75
\$27.00 Suits at 18.00
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\$5.50 Values at \$3.50
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