



Lewiston-Clarkston and the Clearwater Country, Idaho Washington (Classic Reprint)

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Excerpt from Lewiston-Clarkston and the Clearwater Country, Idaho Washington

What would they think, what would they say, those old explorers, hunters, and trappers of fifty or a hundred years ago, could they now see the old Clearwater country in its wonderful transformation! What, too, would the old Chopunnish Indians, the forbears of the present Nez Perce, think and say, could they see their descendants living side by side with an alien race, the skin and brush tepee practically gone, the hunting almost a thing of the past, the Indian pony herds vanished, the "quamash" and "cowse" but little gathered, and in their stead the Indian grain and timothy fields and fruit orchards, the neat and comfortable homes, not to forget the churches and school houses, the herds of fine cattle; the thoroughbred draft horses, and potatoes, pumpkins, melons, vegetables and fruits in abundance.

A beautiful and wonderfully rich and fertile region is this old Clearwater country, so recognized from the beginning by every man who ever traversed it.

The Nez Perce Indians have always been ranked the highest among Indian tribes, in religious fervor, intelligence, honor, manliness, bravery, industry, morality and physical perfection. And one is convinced, from what one sees of their country, that their environment, the land in which they lived, with its delightful climate, fertile soil, magnificent rolling prairies and pastures, pure water, fine timber and imposing landscape, had no small part in making these people the superior tribe.

That those scouts of civilization, the explorers, hunters and missionaries, could foresee, even remotely, what this land would blossom into in the twentieth century, is, of course, almost inconceivable, considering the startling changes wrought by time in the last quarter of a century. Even though Dr. Whitman, at his mission at Waiilatpu, near where Walla Walla now stands, as early as 1841 was raising crops by irrigation, and, presumably, Spalding was doing the same at Lapwai on the Clearwater a few miles above Lewiston, yet the tremendous possibilities of irrigation in the West were not even imagined.

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