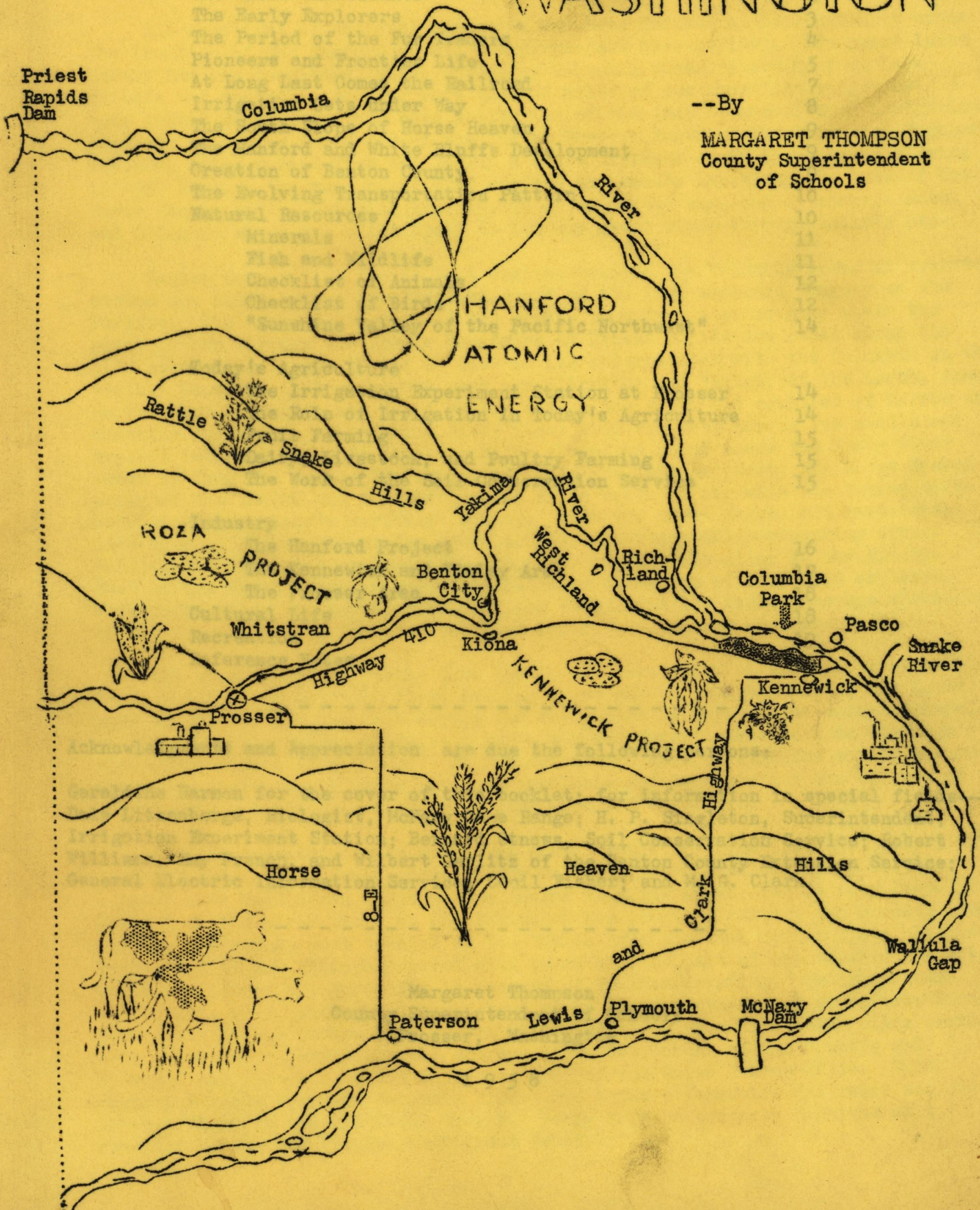


# BENTON COUNTY

## WASHINGTON

--By

MARGARET THOMPSON  
County Superintendent  
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 Margaret Thompson  
 County Superintendent of Schools  
 Prosser, Washington



## GEOGRAPHY

Area, 1,112,320 acres. Population in 1957, 68,600.  
Assessed valuation of all property for 1958 tax year, \$42,661,155.00.

The spotlight of national attention has been focused on Benton County since the location of the Hanford atomic energy project here in 1943. Ten years later McNary Dam was completed, which backed up Columbia River waters to form Lake Wallula and radically changed more than 60 miles of our shoreline geography. A more recent development has been activation of the last of a series of irrigation projects utilizing the water of the Yakima River. Known as the Kennewick Highlands project, water pumped from the Yakima a short distance above Kiona began flowing in 1957 through the main canal that crosses the county map along the base of the Horse Heaven Hills--watering some 19,000 acres on the way--and discharges into the Columbia where the hills break to let the great river through Wallula Gap.

Benton County lies inside that eastern bend of the Columbia where it swerves around the hills before finally taking off on its last westward journey to the Pacific. The western boundary of the county runs from a point near where the river breaks through the Saddle Mountains at Priest Rapids due south along the line separating Ranges 23 and 24 east to its intersection with the Columbia on the south. County neighbors on the west are Klickitat and Yakima; on the north, Grant; on the east, Franklin and Walla Walla; and on the south the counties of Morrow and Umatilla in Oregon. The Yakima River flows from the west across its middle and empties into the Columbia some ten miles above the point where the Snake River comes in from the east. Two ranges of hills run east and west, the Horse Heaven south of the Yakima and the Rattlesnake Hills north of it, with the Yakima Ridge occupying the county's northwest corner. Both the Horse Heaven and Rattlesnake have extensive plateaus at the top which are important wheat-producing areas. The Rattlesnake attains a maximum of 3,627 feet, highest elevation in the county. Most of the Horse Heaven plateau maintains an elevation of 1600 feet or less. McNary Dam holds the normal level of Lake Wallula at 340 feet. Average elevation of the Kennewick area is about 500 feet and of the Prosser area about 650.

The growing season varies from 150 to 200 days, with an average of about 170 days, which means that the first killing frost may be expected during the latter part of October and the last during the early part of April. The annual rainfall in the lower elevations averages between six and seven inches, and in the higher elevations around nine inches. An average of 200 days of sunshine during the year makes for rapid growth where water is available and accounts for the success of soft fruits and the specialty crops like mint and asparagus.

The incorporated cities and towns are: Kennewick (pop. 13,700), located east of the Yakima on the south shore of the Columbia; West Richland (pop. 1,550), located some half dozen miles up the Yakima from its mouth; Benton City (pop. 1,140), located on the north shore of the Yakima at the county's center; and Prosser (pop. 3,100), the county seat located on the Yakima near the west county line. Richland (pop. 26,300) was disincorporated when taken over as part of the Hanford project, but its citizens are currently in process of re-incorporating. Unincorporated communities are: Finley, located about eight miles southeast of Kennewick; Kiona just south of the Yakima from Benton City; Whitstran some half dozen miles north-east of Prosser; Vernita in the extreme northwest corner of the county; and Plymouth and Paterson on the Columbia south of the Horse Heaven Hills. Three highway bridges span the Columbia River--two between Kennewick and Pasco and one between Plymouth and Umatilla, Oregon. Ferry service connects Richland with Franklin County and Vernita with Grant County.



## THE FIRST INHABITANTS

The pre-historic Indians of Benton County lived on the banks of the Yakima and Columbia Rivers in villages close to the water. Their houses—usually strung out in one long "street"—were semi-subterranean, made by first excavating a saucer-shaped pit, erecting a framework of poles, covering this with large mats of reeds, and then banking up dirt around the outside. A hole was left in the top and egress was by ladder. A fireplace in the center served for heating and cooking purposes in winter. Outside were the "public" earth and rock ovens where the entire village might bake clams and fish, or roast various edible roots.

Fishing was carried on by means of nets to which were attached two types of sinkers—notched flat pebbles and large girdled stones. Animals, which formed only a small part of the diet, were hunted with bows and arrows and various traps. The arrowheads were of basalt, petrified wood, jasper, chalcedony, and agate. Dishes might be platters made of cattails, various kinds of baskets, and all sizes of bowls and platters of stone, and to a lesser extent of wood. Pestals of stone were used as we might use our wooden potato mashers for pounding and grinding sunflower and other seeds.

Among their few tools were bone awls and stone scrapers, hammerstones, and choppers. Probably the most valuable tools were the celts, chisels, or axe-shaped instruments of jadite—a crude form of jade, which holds an edge—used in hewing out the insides of their log canoes.

Stone provided many of their luxuries, too, such as pipes made of steatite, a variety of talc soft enough to carve. Stone beads were common. Ornaments might be of stone, the native mussel shells, and the dentalium shells for which they traded with Coast tribes.

When the first white men visited this region the bands living on the lower Yakima and along the Columbia from Priest Rapids to Wallula Gap were known by the general name of "River People"—the Wanapums and closely related Chamnapums. The "Horn" of the Yakima River was a favorite fishing place called Wanawish. The principal village of the Chamnapums was called Chamna and was located below the present Richland at the mouth of the Yakima. Lewis and Clark spelled the name of the latter tribe "Chimnapum," and they called the Wanapums "Sokulks," apparently having misinterpreted as the tribal name and word "skolkol," a variety of camas and one of the traditional food roots.<sup>2</sup> The typical house of the people of this period was built above ground, as described from the following extracts from the Lewis and Clark Journals:

"The nation among which we now are call themselves Sokulks; and with them are united a few of another nation, who reside on a western branch emptying itself into the Columbia and whose name is Chimnapum. The language of both these nations, of each of which we obtained a vocabulary, differs but little from each other. In their dress and general appearance those nations (the Nez Perce), the men wearing a robe of deer or antelope skin, under which a few of them have a short leathern shirt. Their stature is low, their faces broad, and their heads flattened in such a manner that the forehead is in a straight line from the nose to the crown of the head; their eyes are of a dirty sable; their hair, too, is coarse and black, and braided as above without ornament of any kind. Instead of wearing long leathern shirts decorated with beads and shells, the Sokulk females have no other covering but a truss or piece of leather tied round the hips and drawn tight between the legs. The ornaments usually worn by both sexes are large blue or white beads, either pendant from their ears or round the necks,

wrists, and arms; they have likewise bracelets of brass, copper, and horn, and some trinkets of shells, fish bones, and curious feathers.

The houses of the Sokulks are made of large mats of rushes, and are generally of a square or oblong form, varying in length from fifteen to sixty feet, and supported in the inside by poles or forks about six feet high. The top is covered with mats, leaving a space of twelve or fifteen inches the whole length of the house for the purpose of admitting the light and suffering the smoke to pass through. The roof is nearly flat, which seems to indicate that rains are not common in this open country, and the house is not divided into apartments, the fire being in the middle of the large room and immediately under the hole in the roof. The rooms are ornamented with their nets, gigs, and other fishing tackle, as well as the bow for each inhabitant, and a large quiver of arrows, which are headed with flint stones. ... Their chief subsistence is fish. ... The Sokulks possess but few horses, the greater part of their labors being performed in canoes."<sup>3</sup>

The so-called Dreamer religion originated with the Wanapums. Alexander Ross of the Astor expedition in reporting their ritual stressed the term "priest" and called the rapids at the foot of which their main village was located "Priest Rapids." In consequence they have generally been known as the Priest Rapids Indians.

## THE EARLY EXPLORERS

It was toward evening of Wednesday, October 16, 1805, when the Lewis and Clark party first came within sight of the Columbia River. From their camp at the confluence of the Snake and Columbia—now Sacajawea State Park—Captain Clark and two of the men on the 17th ascended the Columbia in a small canoe to the large island opposite the mouth of the Taptail (Yakima) River. At one of the islands visited on the way the Indian women had prepared a feast of boiled salmon which they served on small mats made of cattails. Clark recorded that "the multitudes of this fish are almost inconceivable. He reported also the shooting of a sage grouse which measured two and a half feet between its wing extremities and had tail feathers 13 inches long.

After leaving their camp on the Snake and proceeding down river the party next visited "the great chief called Yelleppit, a handsome, well-proportioned man about five feet eight inches high, and thirty-five years of age, with a bold and dignified countenance," whose band of Walla Walla Indians lived on the southern fringe of what now is Benton County. The white captains presented him with a medal, handkerchief, and a string of wampum. "He requested us to remain till the middle of the day in order that all his nation might come and see us, but we excused ourselves by telling him that on our return we would spend two or three days with him."

On the return journey the following spring the party traded their canoes for horses as they could and traveled by land up the north bank of the river. The hills to the north they recorded as producing "an abundant supply of low grass which is an excellent food for horses." They were fortunate in finding Chief Yelleppit at his village opposite the mouth of the Walla Walla River, for they planned to cross the Columbia here and follow the Indian road up the Walla Walla valley, and they would need the help of his men in getting their horses across the river. However, remembering their promise they remained for an Indian celebration. Highlight of the occasion was the presentation by the chief to Captain Clark of "a fine white horse," in return for which the captain gave him his sword and some balls and powder. In the evening "about a hundred Chimnapums came to the village



and, joining the Wollawollahs who were about the same number, formed themselves in a circle round our camp and waited very patiently till our men were disposed to dance, which they did for about an hour to the tune of the violin. They then requested to see the Indians dance. With this they complied. The whole assemblage stood up and sang and danced. The exercise was not very violent nor very graceful. ... They stood on the same place and merely jumped up at intervals to keep time to the music. Some of our men joined in the dance, to the great satisfaction of the Indians."<sup>4</sup>

Five years later David Thompson, representing the Northwest Fur Company of Canada, came this way, nosed his canoe ashore at the mouth of the Snake River, erected a stake, and tied to it a half sheet of paper on which was inscribed, "Know hereby that this country is claimed by Great Britain ... and that the Northwest Company of Merchants from Canada ... do hereby intend to erect a factory in this place for the commerce of the country around."

#### THE PERIOD OF THE FUR-TRADERS

Thus began the struggle of the United States and England for possession of the Oregon country, the struggle which brought 28 years of joint occupation by both (1818 - 1846).

Donald McKenzie of the Northwest Company arrived in 1818 and built old Fort Walla Walla near the mouth of the Walla Walla River, where Wallula now stands. This became Hudson's Bay Company property when it absorbed the other company in 1821. For 34 years the fur-traders from this inland metropolis grazed their stock in what is now Benton County and cut wild hay from the meadows along the Yakima for winter feed. A well-traveled Indian trail extended from Yellepit's village northward along the Columbia, crossed the Yakima, and continued on to the north of the Rattlesnake Hills and thence to the upper Yakima valley. This in turn became the pack trail of the Hudson's Bay Company men in transporting furs and goods between Fort Walla Walla and their Fort Nisqually on Puget Sound.

In 1846 President James Polk, with his slogan of "54-40 or fight" brought an end to joint occupation. Benton County narrowly escaped becoming a part of British Columbia, for the British had expected the boundary line to run down the river from the Colville area. However when the treaty was drawn up it established the 49th parallel as the boundary all the way to Puget Sound, and the disputed area west and north of the Columbia became definitely American.

#### PIONEERS AND FRONTIER LIFE

Americans now were eager to migrate to the Oregon country, and nearly 5,000 of them came over the Oregon Trail the following summer (1847). While they were on the trail a group of Catholic priests of the Oblate Order visited Yakima valley and near the close of the summer built a small mission, which they called St. Rose, in the area of the riding academy west of the present Richland.

Another arrival that year of 1847 was a brother of Abbie Hanford, mother of the Hanford brothers who later developed the land now occupied by the Hanford Atomic Project. The Whitman massacre occurred in November of that year, and John Holgate--this advance agent for the Hanfords--was among the volunteers in the Cayuse War which followed the massacre. When it ended he went with one of the Hudson's Bay Company pack trains up the old trail that ran through the present Richland and Hanford reservation, crossed the Cascades to Puget Sound, staked the first land claim in what now is the city of Seattle, and sent for the Hanfords to join him.

In 1853 the first train of covered wagons in Yakima valley traveled the same trail. This was the Longmire party, which consisted of 36 wagons carrying more than 140 persons. At Fort Walla Walla the men built a flatboat of driftwood and ferried their wagons and goods across the Columbia, while the cattle and horses swam across under the expert management of Chief Pe-peu-mox-mox and his Walla Walla Indians. After landing on the west shore the wagon train struggled northward through what is now Kennewick and Richland, following the old trail. Here one of their men died and was buried on the north bank of the Yakima.

Following the caravan was a band of Indians, of whom Mr. Longmire has left this description:

"From the Yakima River we had been followed by a band of Indians, who had kept our wives and children in perfect terror. But they chatted and laughed as they rode along with us, the tyees or big men being dressed in buckskin leggings, handsomely beaded, and breech-clouts made of cedar bark. The squaws were dressed much the same, all with painted faces. The squaws carried the papooses done up in proper Indian fashion and hung to the horns of the saddles, where they bobbed up and down in no easy fashion, especially when the ponies were in full gallop, as they were most of the time."<sup>5</sup>

The party had been persuaded to take this short-cut to Puget Sound by news that the soldiers from Fort Steilacoom were building a road from that area across Naches Pass and on to the Columbia River--a military road for which Congress had appropriated \$20,000. As it turned out the road crew had quit before they got to the mountain pass, although they did send men across to blaze the way. The Longmire party became lost and were unable to make the Indians understand where they wanted to go. Finally their leaders went ahead to do some scouting and returned "with the glad news that after crossing the canyon a good road lay before us; and still better news that they had struck a trail which the Steilacoom and Olympia Company had blazed for the coming emigrants."<sup>6</sup> They did have to cut their own way across the forests of the mountain divide and lower their wagons by rope down the west side cliffs, but they reached Puget Sound safely. Governor Isaac I. Stevens the following spring sent Lieutenant Richard Arnold to finish this road. In his report Lieut. Arnold observes: "Near the mouth of the Yakima, where the road crosses, the valley is from one to two miles wide, and I would particularly recommend this place to emigrants as a fine recruiting place after crossing the Columbia."<sup>7</sup>

It was ten years before the first emigrant found this "fine recruiting place." John B. Nelson in 1863 built the first settler's cabin at the mouth of the Yakima and lived in it a year before migrating to the upper valley. His manner of arrival gives a colorful picture of the times. Having decided to leave the comparatively settled Willamette for a new frontier, he shipped his possessions--including the old covered wagon which had brought the family over the Oregon Trail--up the Columbia to Wallula. Here--as one of the daughters told the story in later years--"he and his sons built a scow and loaded it. Mother and daughters and small children embarked on this strange craft. A true pioneer mother and wife, Mrs. Nelson did her part nobly under all circumstances. ...

"The Nelsons proceeded up the Columbia, mules hitched to the scow, father and sons taking turns prodding the slowly moving boat with long poles as it neared the shore. Thirty miles up the river they came to the mouth of the Yakima, where they wintered in a little cabin which they built."<sup>8</sup>

In 1864 President Lincoln signed the bill incorporating the Northern Pacific Railroad Company and authorized a grant of land to such company of every odd



numbered section within a strip forty miles in width on each side of the railroad right-of-way. It was further stipulated in the terms of the land grant that the main line of the railroad should be built through the Yakima Valley. All through the seventies hopes ran high and promotion was active. Eager to be near the railroad, land seekers filed claims on the even numbered sections along the right-of-way. Others, with irrigation in mind, chose land on both sides of the Yakima and Columbia rivers. The Craigs, Wrights, and others settled along the Columbia on the northern border of what is now Benton County, using the old military road and other routes to get to Yakima City, their nearest trading center. Another group-- which included the McNeills, the Souths, the McAlpines, Dr. Cantonwine, Joe Baxter, Lockwood, Ben Rosencrantz, Jack Roberts, B. S. Grosscup, the Robinsons, and others--<sup>9</sup> located between the Horn and the mouth of the Yakima. The earliest permanent settler here was Smith Barnum, whose place in 1875 was made a station on the first mail route running through the valley from Yakima City to Wallula. This later became the Clements place and was located on the flat between the present Richland Y and the Yakima.

All of these first settlers were stock raisers, who grazed their herds for the most part on the public domain and railroad lands. There were no fences, ownership being established when the cowboys rounded up the calves and burned the owner's brand into their skins. Nearly everyone built houses from the driftwood that came down the Columbia during the season of high water. Although food was chiefly beef, cheese, and milk, the settlers from the beginning diverted water onto low-lying land, where they planted fruit trees and all kinds of garden crops.

It was at this time that water-wheels came into use. These were great wheels built on the same principle as those found in Egypt and in the Orient. Equipped with buckets, they were set in the edge of the river, where the moving current kept them turning, the buckets filling with water as they went under and, as they tipped, spilling it into trenches to be carried by gravity flow to orchards and gardens. The discouraging feature about this system was the annual flood, when logs and other debris carried down by the current was apt to tangle with the water-wheel with disastrous effect.

This was the period of the second Indian uprising, the first having been that led by Kamiakin in the fifties. The Nez Perce war had taken place in 1877. The following spring a little band of hostiles who had been with Joseph made their way into the White Bluffs area, seething with revenge. Four cattlemen -- a Mr. King, Jordie Williams, Fred Rolan, and A. Duncan were living at White Bluffs. On the opposite side of the river lived a young couple by the name of Blanche and Lorenzo Perkins. On the morning of July 9, 1878, the Perkins ferried across the river and started to Yakima City on their horses. They had dismounted to rest at the Rattlesnake spring, when their lives were suddenly snuffed out by the Indians, who had reached this point about the same time. Splawn reports that their bodies were found "in the bottom of a shallow ravine near where the old White Bluffs wagon road crossed" Cold Creek.

This road probably came into use as an accompaniment of cattle drives. During the 60's and 70's it came to be the practice of cattlemen of the upper Yakima to drive their stock east through the Moxee valley to the Columbia. Sometimes they took them across the river at White Bluffs and thence around the east end of the Saddle Mountains on drives to the gold mines of Idaho and Montana. At other times it was to winter them along the great river from Priest Rapids to the mouth of the Yakima. Another cattle trail and early wagon road, the Umatilla trail, led from the Columbia at Umatilla rapids just below the present McNary dam across the Horse Heaven hills and came down on the Yakima near the present town of Prosser. Still another led north from Prosser, up Spring Creek, and across the Rattlesnake hills. Except for the few military roads laid out by the army, the first wagon and stage

roads were simply the Indian trails -- which are nearly always referred to by the pioneers as "roads" because the Indian travois wore two ruts similar to those made by wagon wheels. By imperceptible degrees they became cattle trails and then wagon roads.

County roads were authorized early by the Legislature, which started the system of definitely located and publicly maintained roads that we know today. In Benton County the program got under way in 1882, and the first county road was a short stretch on the north bank of the Yakima near Prosser Falls. The number 2 road is of considerable historic interest. It was surveyed by I. A. Navarre, a descendant of Henry of Navarre of France (king of France under the name Henry IV) and the pioneer settler on Lake Chelan. Starting at the ferry landing opposite Wallula, it ran north through the later Hover and Finley, thence west past Coyote spring, and up and across the Horse Heaven hills, and down to Prosser. Five miles of it fell within the long east-west stretch of today's secondary state highway No. 8-E and the County Well road.

#### At Long Last Comes the Railroad

Exactly 30 years from the time Governor Stevens sent Tinkham to investigate Yakima valley as a railroad route, the Northern Pacific started construction of its main line up that valley. From the bridge under construction across the Columbia, the tracks proceeded out Badger valley -- where flowed the Yakima before it was pushed north to the "Horn" by the uplifting Horse Heaven Hills -- and came to the river at Kiona. From there they closely followed the south bank through Prosser and on to the west. Construction camps were located at Kennewick, Kiona, and Prosser; all the settlers profited either by working for the railroad or selling beef and other produce. Ben Rosencrans had large numbers of teams pulling the "scrapers" that turned the dirt in the road-bed construction. That there were children of school age in the camps is reflected in the action establishing the Prosser school district in February of 1884, and then lopping off the east end of the district to form the "Columbia" district at Kennewick six months later.

This was a period when settlers were looking for land as close as possible to the railroad. They either bought railroad land in the odd-numbered sections or homesteaded in the even-numbered sections within the 80-mile ribbon of the Northern Pacific land grant. In 1881 James Kinney, who is credited with having given the Horse Heaven hills their name, homesteaded within the confines of the present Prosser. In 1883 Colonel William Prosser filed on land at the falls of the river a short distance below, later platting a townsite and getting the post office which took his name. Rosencrans bought railroad land in what today is the center of Richland; and a millwright in the employ of the railroad company, C. J. Beach, located near the Kennewick end of the bridge and platted a townsite. The following graphic picture of the unfolding development has been left to us by Emma Cobb Warnecke, Prosser's first school teacher, who arrived at Wallula with her sister and brother-in-law in September, 1883:

"The ferryman told us a great many people were going to the Yakima country. We followed an old trail up the Columbia River, passed a surveyor's tent near where Kennewick now stands, and struck the Yakima River at the Rosencrans ranch. We passed a small railroad camp where Kiona was afterward built and followed the river up to where Prosser now stands. ... We passed a house with a family living in it. Afterward we learned it was Colonel Prosser's homestead and that the family had been there but a few days."<sup>9</sup>

The pioneer teacher filed on a homestead and went back to Oregon to teach a winter term of school, returning in time to take over the new school there when it opened in June, 1884.



An account of the Kennewick development has been left by the daughter of C. J. Beach, who writes:

"Trains were not running till late in '84 and everything, including mail, was brought from Ainsworth by boat or ferried across the river and hauled on wagons over sandy roads. That year, '84, the track reached the site of Yakima, and our camp was replaced by a little railroad town, now large enough to name. It was desired to name it after Chenoweth, an early trapper, but as pronounced by the Indians it sounded like Kennewick, and Kennewick the town was named. A post office was started, the school district organized with fifty-four children, and both have been continued throughout the entire interval."<sup>10</sup>

Up on the Horse Heaven plateau the families of Solomon Webber, Nat Travis, and H. A. Smith settled in 1883; and the following spring Bill Badger and his brother came and took an active part in getting wheat-raising started. The plateau continued to fill up through 1884, and in November the Horse Heaven school district was organized. Action at this time by the Yakima County Superintendent of Schools renumbered the districts, so that Prosser, which had been district No. 33, became No. 16; Kennewick, which had been No. 34, became No. 17, and Horse Heaven was assigned No. 19. The next landmark in Horse Heaven history was the drilling of the county well at public expense in 1888.

In 1885 a school was opened in Kiona for the four children of William Neil, the section foreman. The teacher was Miss Libbie Ketcham, who with her sister Olive started a grocery store. Came William and Clint Kelso from Walla Walla and laid out a townsite. Combining romance and business acumen, the Kelso brothers married the Ketcham sisters, whereupon the grocery store was expanded into the "Kelso Brothers General Merchandise" establishment.

Homesteading and wheat-growing in the Rattlesnake elevation is reflected in a petition headed by Theodore Wright and Charles Carpenter for a road out through Spring Creek gap to the summit of the Rattlesnake Hills. This was surveyed by I. A. Navarre and authorized by the county commissioners in August, 1886. Early in 1888 the county fathers put their official okay on an eastward road through Moxee valley "thence down Rattlesnake Coulee via road known as Priest Rapids road so far as practicable to Cold Creek, thence easterly to the Columbia River to a point now chosen for the location of a ferry across said river."

This was an era of ferries, those at Kennewick and Richland operating until the Pasco-Kennewick bridge was built in 1922, and those at Hanford, White Bluffs, and Vernita continuing in use until taken over by the Hanford atomic energy project. A choice description of an early ferry is given by Helga Travis in her Umatilla Trail. The early ferry at Wallula was horse-operated, she tells us. It would be "towed upstream for about a quarter of a mile, then the horse was loaded onto the ferry and put on a tread. This created power, which was helped by a long sweep-oar moving against the current. On reaching the opposite side, the horse walked off the ferry and was ready to start all over again."<sup>11</sup>

#### Irrigation Gets Under Way

Reclamation paralleled progress of the railroads. Dr. C. A. Cantonwine was among the earliest promoters of canals, and B. S. Grosscup filed the first water right to bring water from the Horn of the Yakima. In 1890 there was a rush to form irrigation districts, as indicated in the records of the county commissioners. The first town of Kennewick had been all but deserted after the boom of construction, but a second townsite was platted in 1892 under the impetus of irrigation. During the same year Nelson Rich of Prosser brought water to the area of Richland. Canals

now ran from the Horn on both sides of the Yakima—one to Kennewick and the other to Richland.

#### The South Slope of Horse Heaven

As early as the 70's settlers had occupied low lands bordering the Columbia below Wallula Gap, depending entirely on river navigation for communication with the outside world. The Mottingers arrived in the 70's. The decade of the 80's witnessed the arrival of Gus Berrian, saw the Switzlers settle at Plymouth and the Patersons at Paterson. During the 90's Dr. Blalock of Walla Walla acquired Blalock Island—formerly Long Island—on which he developed a farm community of some 60 people husbanding vineyards and orchards.

Inspired by the dream of watering the south slope of the Horse Heaven Hills, promoters in 1917 launched the Klickitat Irrigation and Power Company. Their plan was to run a canal from the Klickitat River eastward the entire length of the Plateau to the plains above Plymouth. The Horse Heaven Irrigation District of 330,000 acres was organized and the landowners bonded themselves for a total of \$32,000,000. A land speculation boom followed, only to deflate with the discovery that the project was not feasible. After a checkered career of 30 years the district paid up its obligations in 1947 and officially closed its career.

#### The Hanford and White Bluffs Development

To the north a project to divert water from the Columbia got under way soon after 1900, with Judge Cornelius Hanford as the key figure. The Hanfords had settled in Seattle during the fifties and were among that group which set out to build their own railroad through Snoqualmie Pass to reach the Columbia at Priest Rapids and continue to a connection with the Walla Walla road of Dr. Baker's company. The Seattle and Walla Walla Railroad and Transportation Company, it was called. Also as a young man Judge Hanford had spent a year in this part of the territory teaching school and working for a cattle outfit. His enthusiasm for this area may have stemmed from that early experience. Be that as it may, the Milwaukee bought the holdings of the old Seattle and Walla Walla Railroad and Transportation Company and promised to run a branch line down river to serve the people of Benton County. With this prospect the towns of Hanford and White Bluffs were platted and a pumping plant was installed to serve two irrigation tracts of about 11,000 acres each.

#### Creation of Benton County

The Northern Pacific with its large land grant was especially interested in promoting irrigation projects along its route and gave its support to the Kennewick Highlands project in the early 90's. Then came the financial crisis which sent the road into bankruptcy. Later in that decade the Klondike gold rush and the Spanish American War drained off population.

Finally after the turn of the century the local economy began to move ahead again. By this time civic leaders had decided that there should be a county seat nearer than Yakima or Goldendale—in short, that the region inside this bend of the Columbia ought to be a separate county. Klickitat County had been established in 1859 to include all of Washington between the Columbia and the crest of the Cascades. On January 21, 1865, Yakima County was carved out of that portion of Klickitat between the crest of the Horse Heaven Hills and the Simcoe Mountains on the south and a line on the north "running due west from a point two miles above the lower steamboat landing at Priest Rapids on the Columbia River."<sup>12</sup> Nelson Rich, state representative from this area in 1901, introduced a bill to make a new county of those portions of Klickitat and Yakima Counties lying east of Range 23. It failed of passage both in 1901 and 1903 but was enacted into law by the legislature of 1905 and signed by the Governor on March 8, thus bringing into existence the County of Benton (named after Senator Benton of Missouri) with Prosser as the county seat.



The first county commissioners were Carl A. Jensen, W. P. Simms, and J. W. Carey. They held their first meeting on June 23rd. One of their first acts was to approve a plat for the town of Hover, filed by Herbert A. and Mata C. Hover. This was near the landing site of the ferry operating between Wallula and Benton County. There was already a school district at Finley, organized by Yakima County in 1904; and in 1906 another district was established at Hover.

Records of the County Superintendent of Schools begin with the year 1905 and show school directors for that year as follows: Finley--L. Hedington, C. W. Metz, and M. A. Cooper; Kennewick--L. A. Jarnagan, Don F. Cresswell, and W. F. Sonderman; Richland (organized in 1889)--Harry Van Horn, E. Timmerman, and J. W. Randall; Horse Heaven--A. V. Rydholm, J. C. Andrews, and J. A. Pratt; and Prosser--A. M. Campbell, H. W. Fisk, and F. W. Nessly. Kennewick teachers were C. Vertras, Mary J. Greer, Fay Pierce, Eleanor Stair, and H. H. Peter. Richland had two teachers--A. H. Townshend and Laura Long. Minnie Anderson taught the Horse Heaven school. Prosser had a staff of thirteen: H. C. Ostren, W. M. Taylor, Nellie H. Forth, Ada Philips, Millie Byham, S. C. Yoder, Emma Jacobs, Laura Rogers, Maud Dixon, Gertrude Elliot, Mabelle Crufutt, Ettie Wise, and Myrtle Tucker. Three one-room schools had been organized under Klickitat County to serve the children of families living the river from Wallula Gap westward.

#### The Evolving Transportation Pattern

River navigation, which was born with the gold rush of the 60's and flourished for nearly half a century, was now superseded by rail transportation. The Milwaukee completed its branch line into Benton County in 1915, extending down the west bank of the Columbia to Vernita and then east to White Bluffs and Hanford. In the meantime the Union Pacific had built from its eastern Washington extension across the Columbia and up the north side of the Yakima River to the city of Yakima. This was in 1908, at which time Benton City came into being. Also the Spokane, Portland, and Seattle--owned jointly by the Great Northern and Northern Pacific--extended a line from the Northern Pacific bridge at Kennewick down the north bank of the Columbia.

Small boats continued to operate on the river for another decade, carrying mail and passengers. Best known were the Hanford Flyer and the Mountain Gem. Opening of the Celilo Canal in 1915 gave river navigation a "shot in the arm" by making barge transportation more practicable. The Kennewick Port District was created at that time. John Neuman, the present port district manager, tells us that: "It consisted of less than a five-square-mile area coincidental with the city limits of Kennewick and two miles down stream. Property was acquired in the area now known as the Ivy Street Terminal and a dock and two warehouses were built by the district to serve as a terminal facility. Within a year several river boats and towing companies using narrow beam river steamers were carrying general commodity cargoes up and down the Columbia River."

However, during the 1920's water navigation was supplanted entirely by rail transportation and the evolving trucking industry.

#### NATURAL RESOURCES

Basalt (lava rock) underlies the entire county. This is part of the Columbia plateau lava province which geologists have estimated to average more than a mile in thickness. That this estimate may be conservative is indicated by the fact that the Standard Oil Company in drilling a test well north of Prosser in 1957 abandoned the project at a depth of 8400 feet (1.62 miles), since they still had not penetrated below the basalt. Following and perhaps accompanying the outpouring of lava

the surface was disturbed by upfolds and downfolds to which geologists apply the general term "Yakima Marginal Folds."<sup>13</sup> The principal upfolds are the Horse Heaven Hills, the Rattlesnake Hills, and the Saddle Mountains.

#### Minerals

One of the more interesting of Benton County's undeveloped natural resources is diatomite. A 20-foot bed of this mineral near Kiona is considered one of the purest in the state. Analysis shows it to be 86.25 per cent silica, with the remainder made up of alumina, iron oxide, lime, and Magnesia. It comes from the siliceous cells of diatoms found in the inland sea which once covered this region and accounts for the white bluffs along the Columbia. Diatomite is commonly used as a source of silica for glass manufacture, in polishes, in filters and insulation board, and is considered to have possibilities for construction blocks. Other minerals of the area are certain clays for brick-making and ceramics, sand and gravel, and crushed basalt.

#### Soils

Soils range from sandy areas along the river channels to heavy loams tending toward clay in mountainous area. The major portion, however, is made up of loams, silt loams, and sandy loams. Nitrogen and phosphate fertilizers and generally used in the irrigated areas.

Sage brush and bunchgrass covered the land when discovered by the white man. A few cottonwoods and willow trees grew along the river banks, but the great spread between high and low water prevented any extensive tree growth.

#### Fish and Wildlife

As in all sage brush areas jack rabbits have always been abundant. Coyotes followed the range of this prey. A rare and interesting bird (like the one shot by Captain Clark near the mouth of the Yakima in 1805) was the native grouse, or sage grouse. Its size was approximately that of a small turkey. Although it does not usually survive the inroads of civilization, a flock of these birds, reported to be increasing in numbers, continue to inhabit the northern fringe of the Rattlesnake plateau. Great Numbers of ducks and geese populate the shores of the Yakima and Columbia Rivers, and geese feed regularly in the wheat fields all winter. Chinese pheasants, many of which have been planted from the state game farm near Finley, flourish especially well, as do Chukar and Hungarian partridges. Deer are often seen north of the Yakima River and are reported to be on the increase.

Following is a checklist of the principal game fish found in the Columbia and Yakima:

Bass	
Large mouth	
Small mouth	
Blue gill	
Crappie	
Perch	
Salmon (in season)	
Blueback	
Chinook	
Silver	
	Steelhead (in season)
	Sunfish
	Trout
	Eastern brook
	German brown
	Rainbow
	Whitefish

Among the scrap fish are golden and blue carp, chisel mouth (also known as chub), blueheads (catfish), shiners, squak, and suckers.



A Checklist of animals includes:

Badger	Mouse, grasshopper	Otter
Beaver	harvest	Rabbit, cotton-tail
Coyote	house	Calif. black-tailed
Deer, mule	jumping	jack rabbit
Kangaroo rat	meadow	white-tailed
Marmot	white-footed	Raccoon
Mink	Muskrat	Rat, Norwegian
Bobcat	Otter	Skunk, spotted
		striped
		Squirrel, Wash. ground
		Weasel

A Checklist of Birds includes:

Avocet	Goose, Canada
Bittern, American	Great basin
Blackbird, Brewer's	lesser Canada
red-winged	lesser snow goose
yellowheaded	white-fronted
Bluebird, Mountain	Grebe, pied-billed
western	eared
Catbird	horned
Chat, long-tailed	western
Chickadee, black-capped	Grosbeak, blackheaded
Coot	Grouse, sage
Cormorant, double-crested	Gull, California
Cowbird	glaucous
Crane, Sandhill	ringbilled
Crow	Hawk, Cooper's
Dove, Mourning	duck hawk
Duck, American Golden-eye	groshawk
American merganser	American rough-legged
hooded merganser	ferruginous roughleg
baldpate	marsh
Barrows golden-eye	osprey
Bufflehead	prairie falcon
Canvasback	red-tailed
Gadwall	sharpshinned
old squaw	sparrow
pintail	Heron, black-crowned night
redhead	great blue
ringneck	northern green
ruddy	Hummingbird, Rufous
scaup, lesser	Jay, California
mallard	Kingbird, Arkansas
scoter, surf	eastern
white-winged	Killdeer
shoveller	Kingfisher, belted
teal, blue-winged	Kinglet, golden-crowned
cinnamon	ruby-crowned
green-winged	Lark, meadow
wood duck	Loon, common
Eagle, bald	northern horned
golden	Magpie
Finch, cassin's	Mimic thrush, sage thrasher
goldfinch	Night hawk, western
house finch	Nuthatch, pygmy
Flycatcher, ask throated	white-breasted
Traill's	
western	

Oriole, Bullock's	Swallow, bank
Owl, barn	barn
long-eared	cliff
screech	purple martin
short-eared	rough-winged
snow pygmy, burrowing	tree
western	violet green
Partridge, Chukar	Swan, whistling
Hungarian	Tanager, western
Phalarope, northern	Tern, black
Wilson's	Caspian
Pheasant, Chinese	Forster's
Phoebe, Say's	Thrasher, sage
Pint, American	Thrush, hermit
Poorwill	varied
Plover, black-bellied	Towee, spotted
Quail, bob white	Vireo, western warbling
Coturnix	yellowthroated
valley	Vulture, turkey
Raven	Warbler, Audubon's
Robin	Calaveras
Sandpiper, western solitary	Grinnel's water thrush
spotted	Macgillivray's
Shrike, loggerhead	orange-crowned
northwestern	myrtle
Snipe, Wilson's	Townsend's
Snowbird (Junco), Oregon	yellow
Sparrow, chipping	yellow-throated
English	Waxwing, Bohemian
grasshopper	cedar
lark	Woodpecker, northwest flicker
sage	Wren, canyon
savannah	house
vesper	long-billed marsh
white-crowned	rock
Starling	Yellowlegs, lesser
	greater



## "Sunshine Valley of the Pacific Northwest"

The most valuable of this region's natural resources are sunshine and water. The first stockmen, and after them the orchardists, continually expounded the advantages of these mild sunny winters. Clarence Hanford, brother of Judge Hanford and founder of Seattle's Lowman and Hanford Store, is reported to have spent most of his time on his large farm in the Hanford area because of the health-giving sunshine. His foreman--the late Edmund Anderson, White Bluffs pioneer--liked to relate stories of Mr. Hanford and his hobbies of raising sun-loving crops like cotton, tobacco, sugar cane, and peanuts. The first industrialists were quick to discover the commercial advantages of grape juice sweetened only by the natural sugar generated in the grapes by sunshine. Gradually--as more water from the Columbia and Yakima has combined with sunshine to increase crop yields, and more people have settled here to get away from cold winters or to escape fog and overcast skies--the citizens of this valley where the Yakima and Snake rivers merge with the Columbia have come to realize that sunshine is their most important resource.

Water, of course, is used not only for irrigation and domestic purposes, but for the generating of electricity. Two generating plants are operated on the Yakima River by the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, one at Prosser and one at Chandler where water is pumped to the main canal of the Kennewick project. In addition to the McNary dam on the south border of the county another Columbia River dam is in process of construction at Priest Rapids, all feeding electric power into the network of transmission lines operated by the Bonneville Power Administration. Except for a small rural area served by the Rural Electric Administration, Benton County's distribution comes through a Public Utility District supplied by Bonneville lines.

### TODAY'S AGRICULTURE

#### The Irrigation Experiment Station at Prosser

Sunshine was responsible for locating Washington's irrigation experiment station in Benton County. In consideration of factors like minimum number of sunny days, a south-facing slope warmed by winter sun and protected from north winds, together with good soil and availability of irrigation water, a site for this branch of the State College was selected north of Prosser in 1917. The first field was plowed and water delivered in May, 1919; and in 1921 the present superintendent, H. P. Singleton, was assigned to the station. "We were more concerned then with varieties and fertility," says Mr. Singleton. Since that time the station has grown from 80 to 550 acres, all of which are irrigable. Among their notable achievements has been the development of hybrid varieties of corn that thrive exceedingly well in this region of cool summer nights where it was once thought corn could not be grown successfully. This experimentation accounts for the fact that the second highest corn yield in the national DeKalb corn-growing contest for 1957 came from a farm just across the Columbia in Franklin County.

The experimental program of today is conducted by several cooperating agencies. The staff members of the Irrigation Experiment Station are members of their respective departments of the State College of Washington. All projects are planned as part of a statewide program or, in the case of the U. S. Department of Agriculture agencies, as a part of a regional program. Departments of the State College represented here are Agricultural Engineering, Agronomy (covering field crops and soils), Animal Science, Entomology, Horticulture, and Plant Pathology. The Station's 1957 report listed 96 investigations currently in progress, covering subjects from biology of the alkali bee and insect transmission of bean virus diseases to microbial activity in irrigated soils and the control of weeds with chemicals.

#### The Role of Irrigation in Today's Agriculture<sup>14</sup>

Irrigation is of paramount importance in Benton County agriculture of today. The 1954 census reported that

1500 farms containing 75,000 acres of harvested crops were irrigated. The major type of irrigation is by rill or furrow.

On the dryland of the county there are some 300,000 acres of cropland wheat and other small grains. The Chandler ditch project is being developed to bring in 300 new farms in the 14,000 acres of the Kennewick Highlands. Only a fourth of the land received water in 1957, but all is scheduled to be covered in 1958.

The average size farm in the county is 401 acres. The total value of farm products sold in 1954 was \$15,377,352, of which \$12,432,866 was from the sale of crops; the remaining \$2,944,486 was from the sale of livestock and livestock products.

Some of the main field crops under irrigation include, with approximate acreage, the following: mint, 3000--approximately one-sixth the acreage of the United States; hops, 2000; beets, 2100; corn, 3000; potatoes, 3000; asparagus, hay, 15,000 (legumes and seed crops included). A large number of other field crops and vegetables are grown in the county.

#### Fruite Farming

Fruit production is on a large scale, amounting close to 4,600 acres. Soft fruits (cherries, peaches, apricots, prunes, and plums) account for nearly half of this, or about 2700 acres. There are 700 acres of apples and 200 acres of pears. Grapes are still the leading fruit, with 2000 acres of Concord grapes being grown. Strawberries, black caps, and blackberries are grown on about fifty acres.

#### Dairy, Livestock, and Poultry Farming

Livestock and livestock products rank next to field crops in sale value in the county. According to the 1954 census the following changes have taken place the past few years.

Dairying is still a minor type of farming, but the number of dairy cattle has increased steadily since 1950. Statistics show about 150 dairymen milking about 4000 cows. The production per cow has increased sharply.

Reports on swine show only three to four thousand head. There are presently only about half the number of sheep raised in the county in 1950. The main reason is that no longer have the large range flocks been maintained, the transition being to the smaller farm flocks. Diminishing summer range and difficulty in securing adequate labor account for the change. Many of the large flocks have been replaced by cattle. On the other hand, there are a greater number of farm flocks are to be found than in 1950.

Poultry is a minor type of farming and has not changed much in the past few years. The 1954 census shows approximately 60,000 chickens.

Beef cattle numbers have about doubled since 1950 with many cattle being fed in feed lots using corn and other crops that we are now producing in the county. Figures indicate approximately 20,000 beef cattle.

#### The Work of the Soil Conservation Service

Benton County has two soil conservation districts--East and West Benton--where farmers and soil technicians struggle with tough conservation problems. The soils in general are rather light in texture, making wind erosion a probability unless control measures are carefully applied. Water erosion for the most part is confined to the irrigated areas, where the problem is further complicated by variations in soil textures, slope depth, and profiles. The hazards of leveling and smoothing of new lands for irrigation must be anticipated and met with a timely conservation plan. Irrigation systems must be adapted to the land conditions and water applied as necessary for the plant needs so as to reduce seepage losses.

The fact that several irrigation districts are established across the slope, one above the other without regard for drainage, further complicates the problem of



managing these 80,000 irrigated acres. To facilitate an understanding of the overall problems land-capability surveys are made on air photographs. These capability photos, together with information as to safe use, are supplied to the farmers who are cooperating with the Soil Conservation Districts. These may include photos of neighboring lands, since joint action by groups with like problems are called for.

The soil surveys are keyed to the standard soil surveys being made nationally.

A list of the soil series thus far recognized in Benton County are as follows:

Adkins	Prosser
Alderdale	Quincy
Beverly	Renslow
Burbank	Ritzville
Burke	Sagemoor
Esquatzel	Scootney
Hezel	Starbuck
Kennewick	Umapine
Kiona	Wamba
Koehler	Warden
Pasco	Winchester

and miscellaneous land types.

#### INDUSTRY

##### The Hanford Project

The largest industry of Benton County, of course, is the Hanford Atomic Products Operation, which currently employs some 9,000 workers and pays out about \$60 million annually in salaries and wages. The project is located on a government-owned reservation of some 600 square miles bounded for the most part by the Columbia and Yakima rivers and the Rattlesnake Hills. The name comes from the town of Hanford and its adjacent irrigation district which were absorbed when the project was launched during World War II. There is no longer any town or post office of Hanford, the housing and business offices for the operation being centered in Richland.

The site in Benton County was selected in 1942 because it was sparsely populated and offered plenty of pure cold water and an adequate supply of electric power. In March of 1943 landowners were served with notices that Uncle Sam was about to buy their holdings and they must vacate. At once the E. I. duPont de Nemours Company, as prime contractor for the U. S. Corps of Army Engineers, Manhattan District, moved in to construct and operate the project through the war. Only a tiny handful of key officials knew what was being made until the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and the secret was revealed.

On September 1, 1946, the General Electric Company replaced duPont as prime contractor; and on January 1, 1947, the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission took over from the Army Engineers, and plutonium manufacture at Hanford became a peace-time operation. The following is an explanation of the process by General Electric:

Plutonium is an artificial and radioactive metallic element, a basic ingredient for the atomic bomb and a possible fuel for atomic power reactors of the future. The manufacturing job that goes on behind Hanford barricades is based on a process that was considered impossible 20 years ago. Atoms of one element are transformed into atoms of other elements.

The "transmutation" of atoms takes place in a reactor, a huge block of extremely pure graphite as large as a five-story building, enclosed in thick concrete and steel shielding to protect workers from dangerous atomic radiations.

Here cylindrical uranium "slugs", canned in aluminum jackets, are inserted into horizontal tubes which pierce the reactor. There are two kinds of uranium—U-235, which is fissionable (capable of breaking in half, giving up neutrons and forming two smaller atoms of other elements) and U-238, which has the capacity of absorbing neutrons.

The transmutation occurs when inside the reactor, neutrons from the U-235 go flying off at a great rate, thump around in the graphite until they have slowed down a little, and then, if they hit atoms of U-238, settle down to become part of new and heavier atoms.

The new atoms go through some changes, throwing out beta particles and gamma rays in the process, and finally adjust themselves to the greater internal weight and become atoms of plutonium—PU-239.

When they are removed from the reactor, irradiated slugs are a mixture of uranium, plutonium and the lighter-and highly radioactive-elements formed when the U-235 atoms split approximately in half to release neutrons.

The mixture is then put through a separations process which consists of extracting the plutonium from the uranium and other elements. Unused uranium is reclaimed and highly radioactive leftovers are stored underground.

Throughout the entire process, nearly everything has to be done by remote control and often behind thick walls of concrete with windows of thick, heavily leaded glass to keep radiation away from people doing the work.

Water is pumped through reactors by the tens of thousands of gallons per minute to carry off the tremendous heat generated. Aluminum jackets protect the slugs from corrosion by the cooling water. These are removed later as part of the separations process.

To control the speed of the process and turn it off and on, "control rods" can be inserted or withdrawn through tubes in the reactors to soak up varying numbers of neutrons. A number of systems, each independent of others, have been created to shut down reactors automatically in case of a man-made or natural disaster such as an earthquake, bombing raid or a power failure.

##### The Kennewick and Finley Area

Kennewick's oldest industry was established in 1907—in the days when the "Grape Festival" was an annual event. It was the Church Grape Juice Company, which featured the natural sugar of its product. This pioneer company was absorbed by the Welch Grape Juice Company in recent years. Another pioneer industry was that of manufacturing concrete irrigation pipe.

Many small firms have established plants here since the influx of Hanford workers. One has manufactured building blocks, concrete and pumice. Another is devoted to iron working and metal fabrication. There are a number of canning and food-processing plants.



In 1951 the North Pacific Grain Growers erected a concrete grain elevator in the industrial section of Kennewick. It boasts a height of 225 feet, the Smith Tower in Seattle being the only structure in Washington that is higher. A metal annex was constructed in 1954 to hold an additional million bushels, bringing the total storage capacity to nearly four million bushels.

The Kennewick Port District, by vote of the people, in 1954 expanded its boundaries to include all of Benton County south of the Yakima River and east of a line running from the vicinity of Kiona to Plymouth. It has 49 shoreline miles on the Columbia, extending seven miles downstream from McNary dam. Within this area it has set up seven industrial sites or zones with immediate access to both rail and water transportation.

At the Hedges station on the S. P. & S. southeast of Kennewick a small chemical plant was built in 1951 by the allied Chemical and Dye Corporation. During 1956 a pipeline was completed across the county bringing natural gas from the San Juan Basin of New Mexico. Depending on this as raw material, the Phillips Pacific Chemical Company the same year constructed a plant near Finley to manufacture anhydrous ammonia. This is a fertilizer which is applied to the soil by attaching a trailer tank to disc plows from which run hose lines to lay the gas under the soil as it is turned into furrows by the discs. It may be applied also by metering the ammonia into irrigation water. Another fertilizer is "Nitro-Sul," produced by the Kerley Chemical Corporation, which is currently erecting a plant near that of the Phillips Company. A second plant under construction in the same area is that of the Gas-Ice Corporation to manufacture liquid carbon dioxide and dry ice.

#### The Prosser Area

In the western end of the county the processing and packing of fruits and vegetables is important. Prosser Packers, established in 1949, provide a seasonal employment for 175 workers in the processing and packing of fresh fruits and vegetables for quick freezing. Another plant packs dried beans. One of the older industries is that of making alfalfa meal. Eleven potato warehouses give employment to about 300 workers during the season in washing, culling, and sacking this produce. A recent addition to industrial facilities has been the opening of a stock sales yard at the outskirts of Prosser.

#### CULTURAL LIFE

Musical and dramatic productions, art exhibits, and hobby shows reveal an impressive volume of high-class talent throughout Benton County. Several local artists rank with the best in the Pacific Northwest. Good drama is regularly produced by the Gay Players of Prosser and the Richland Players. Richland also has a Light Opera Company that stages two productions annually, and there are several fine choral groups. The Mid-Columbia Symphony Orchestra, made up of musicians of both Benton and Franklin Counties, is now in its thirteenth season. Ballet lovers were finally successful in persuading the world-famous Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo to include Kennewick in its annual tour, so that ballet has been a highlight of late winter offerings since 1956.

A production of this magnitude is possible here because of the splendid auditorium of the Kennewick High School, with a seating capacity of 1450 persons and exceptionally good acoustical properties and lighting facilities. Beside this senior high school the Kennewick system includes one junior high school, with a second scheduled for completion by September, 1958, and five elementary schools and a sixth to be built in 1959. Richland has one senior high and two junior high schools, with six elementary schools. Prosser has a senior high, junior high, and two elementary schools. The Benton City and River View districts have one each, high and elementary schools, on the eight-four plan. The county still has three rural schools,

those at Plymouth, Paterson, and Vernita. Enrollments by school district, as of October 1, 1957, were as follows: Kennewick, District 17, 5,648; Paterson, District 50, 28; Kiona-Benton City District 52, 648; River View District 53, 394; Prosser District 116, 1,601; and Richland District 400, 7,050. In the two private schools, the Bethlehem Lutheran school of Kennewick had 157 enrolled in nine grades, and Richland's Christ the King School (Catholic had 620 students in six grades.

The churches are closely associated with the business and cultural life of the several communities, and all major denominations are represented. In Richland most of the Protestant denominations are grouped together in United Protestant Churches under the regional authority of the Washington and Northern Idaho Council of Churches and Christian Education. Protestant churches of the several communities work in cooperation through an area ministerial association.

The Mid-Columbia Regional Library, established in 1948, is supported by taxes levied by a library district which covers most of Benton and Franklin Counties. The main library is located in Kennewick, with branches in West Richland and Benton City and a station at Vernita; and the rural areas are served by two bookmobiles. If the library does not have a book desired by a reader it is obtained for him through the Northwest inter-library loan service. However, Mid-Columbia owns an impressive collection, including films filmstrips, slides, records, and pictures, in addition to books.

#### RECREATION

Many people enjoy walking about the hills on mild winter days and during spring and autumn, having learned that the desert landscape has color and beauty and a fascination all its own which grows on one. Conspicuous in early spring are the desert sunflowers, the seeds of which were gathered by the Indians and pioneers and ground into meal. Another is the salmon globe mallow, which mixes a salmon pink with the sage green to give the hillsides the appearance of having been painted. One of the loveliest flowers, in spite of its forbidding thorns, is the cactus, or prickly pear, which grows almost in carpets in certain areas and has large pink blossoms. A checklist of wildflowers, by their common names, include:

Antelope brush	Horsetail	Rabbit grass
Bachelor's button	Iris	Sagebrush
Balsam root	Larkspur	Salsify
Blue-eyed grass	Lupine	Sand verbena
Bunchgrass	Mallow	Shepherd's purse
Buttercup	Mariposa lily	Smartweed
Cactus	Milk vetch	Sumac
Cattail	Milkweed	Wallflower
Daisy	Mint	Watercress
Dandelion	Morning glory	White parsnip
Dog fennel	Penstemon	Wild clematis
Fiddle-neck	Peppergrass	Wild hyacinth
Flax	Phlox	Wild rose
Goldenrod	Plantain	Yarrow
Greasewood	Primrose	Yellowbell

The most popular activity for hikers is rock hunting. People go individually and as clubs and hunt for interesting rocks, which chiefly are petrified wood. All of central Washington was wooded at one time preceding the lava flows which make up the Columbia Basin. Wood in swamps or log jams in lakes would be too wet



to burn when it was buried by a layer of hot lava. There it lay until little by little each cell of wood would be replaced by stone, which is petrified wood. Not infrequently it then would be subjected to the heat of another wave of molten lava, which might cause it to become clear, and we call it agate. Many of the "rock hounds" who collect these stones go a step further and learn to saw and polish them. Related to this hobby is that of hunting Indian artifacts, and there are a number of excellent collections assembled by the devotees of this form of recreation.

Golf enthusiasts play on the 9-hole course of the Lower Valley Country Club ten miles west of Prosser. The golf course most used is that of the Tri-City Golf Club in Kennewick. Another is located along the Yakima near West Richland. Beginners find a smaller course in Columbia Park.

An area YMCA and other youth groups are organized to provide many types of recreation, including arts and crafts, for young people. With churches and schools cooperating with sponsoring civic organizations, an active program is carried on throughout the year, culminating with summer camp schedules in the Cascades and in the Blue Mountains. A youth day camp has been developed in Columbia Park, called Camp Kiwanis, with assembly hall, cabins, comfort station, and picnic grounds. This is available to all youth groups and is used for day-time programs throughout the summer, evening campfire gatherings, and overnight camping.

Columbia Park between Kennewick and Richland is under development by the County Park Board on some 400 acres of land owned by the federal government as part of its "insulating border" around the lake above McNary Dam. The entire four miles of water front is devoted to picnic areas. The Kennewick end has a playland and riding academy, a golf driving range, and a 9-hole "pitch and putt" golf course. The other end of the park provides facilities for overnight tent camping. The city park system of Kennewick had its beginning in the town plat made during the early 1900's by the nationally famous Olmstead firm of landscape architects. Of the present five parks the largest is Keewaydin near the high school and adjacent to a recreation area which includes swimming pool and bath house. Prosser has two city parks and a recreation area which includes a swimming pool. Richland has followed the laudable policy of reserving all land bordering the Yakima and Columbia Rivers for park purposes. The developed portion includes the original city park on the Columbia dedicated to the public by Howard Amon when the original town of Richland was established over fifty years ago.

Since the formation of Wallula Lake boating and water-skiing have become major recreational activities. Each year the number of boats seems to double that of the previous year, as do the number of water skiers. Sailboats are popular with many, who not infrequently may be seen enjoying the water by moonlight. Area residents and an increasingly large number of visiting tourists find more and more ways to enjoy the sunshine in this "Sunshine Valley of the Pacific Northwest."

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#### REFERENCE NOTES

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