

Settling The Rogue Valley

The Tough Times - The Forgotten People



By Barbara Hegne

welcome to the elegant balls, with their pockets full of gold nuggets, they were greeted with open arms by the businessmen.

The Gold and the Diggers. In 1853, Herman Francis Reinhart took a walk up the two forks of Jackson Creek. He was impressed with what he saw. *"The gold, in some quantity, is exhaustless. New diggings are discovered somewhere every day. There is gold enough--more than can be washed out....saw some rich claims of *Shively, Amos Blue and Newt Bramson, who had a rich claim on the left-hand fork. Blue and Bramson took out over \$2500 in one day. One piece weighed \$1000 and more, the largest ever taken out of the Southern Oregon mines."* (31)

Gold was being found on every stream around the countryside. As early as the fall of 1852, Robert Blackwell, his partner Kersey, and others, dug a water ditch near Willow Springs to the Blackwell Gulches for mining purposes. In May 1853, Robert Blackwell sold his share to Harry Brown of Siskiyou County, but Blackwell's son, and others, kept mining. It later became Blackwell Hills Mining Company. (32)

The Chinese had come to Jacksonville in the early 1850's and Welborn Beeson Sr. mentions them being there in 1854. The Chinese dug ditches and tunnels and became the main work force of the mining community. In the beginning, they lived in tents and make-shift shacks. Later, they established a string of shack houses on Main Street in Jacksonville. The Chinese had their own laundry, gambling houses, boarding houses, and later a bawdy house. They had opium dens where both Chinese and whites gathered. The Chinese could buy opium and other similar drugs through mail order. The Chinese worked as miners, cooks, servants, gamblers, and later, they helped build the railroads. (33)

The Hawaiians, called Kanakas, Sandwich Islanders, Owyhees and Blue Men came to mine for gold. They were brought under contract to the Pacific Northwest from Hawaii as laborers to work for the Hudson Bay Company. When gold was discovered in California, the Kanakas worked the gold fields. (34)

Prejudice against the Kanakas, Negroes, Chinamen, and Indians was obvious when the early Territorial laws were being written. In Oregon, Samuel R. Thurston, the first Territorial delegate,



Methodist Preacher, Fletcher Royal, Wife Mary Ann, and four of their children, 1860. They came to Oregon Territory in 1853 on the 'Preacher's Wagon Train.

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county for attending a Kanaka nine days on Jackson Creek. Some Kanakas died from hard times and never reached their homeland again. One Kanaka, James A Maui, died in Sterlingville May 19, 1863. He was only 22-years old. His friend, Kalahu, rode into Jacksonville to report the death and give notice to the newspaper. On his way back, Kalahu was thrown from his horse and he also died of his injuries. (37)

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- (18-19) Indian Wars of the Rogue River, Ibid. Pg. 78. Letters of B. F. Dowell to Mrs. F. F. Victor Sept. 25, 1877, Bancroft Library. Haines ibid. Tucker William Pierce, The History of Jackson County, Oregon, University of Washington 1931, Walling, A. G., Ibid. *The history of Jackson Co. by William Pierce Tucker claims there were two Indian boys hanged. The Early Indian Wars of Oregon by Frances Fuller Victor. 1894. Letters of John R. Tice, Ibid. B. F. Dowell's letters mentions one Indian boy, but not the other Indians. Walling reports two Indian boys hanged, pg. 363. The other Indians involved in the killings of Kyle, Wills, and Edwards were not tried and hanged until October 1854, verified by actual court records.
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- (22) Royal Thomas. F. notebook, Ibid.
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