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Polson, the Metropolis of the Lower Lake Country and the Hebron of the Flathead Indian Reservation

The blue canopy of heaven arches over a veritable Eden in that part of the Flathead country between Somers, Montana, on the north, and on the south at Ravalli, Montana, where the reservation stage line connects with the Northern Pacific railroad. In the valley lie the fruit and agricultural lands that each year return to those who work them vast stores of gold, and these are bordered on the west by the gracefully undulating foothills of the Rockies, fabulously rich in coverings of timber, and on the east by the Mission range of the same mountains, with its abrupt and rugged peaks, all pregnant with precious minerals that have never yet been touched by the hand of man.

In the center of this vastly rich section lies Polson, the metropolis of the lower lake country and the Hebron of the Flathead reservation. The nucleus of the present little city now stands on Second street in the form of a two-room, adobe roof log cabin, in which the first trading post was established some 25 years ago by Harry Lambert. The business passed through successive ownerships and is now known as the F. L. Gray Co. The city was named ten years ago, at the time the post-office was first created, after David Polson, one of the first white men who settled in this section. Mr. Polson was a Scotchman, and came into the country some 45 years ago. He engaged in the stock business, roaming his herds over the vast plains of the Mission valley, and at the time of his death a few years since had amassed a considerable fortune.

To the north of Polson lies Flathead Lake, the largest body of fresh water west of the great lakes, and from the standpoint of scenic grandeur the most beautiful in the world. This lake is 35 miles long and 15 miles wide, covering an area of 360 square miles. It is divided into two almost equal parts by the line of the Flathead reservation, which after next April will be obliterated. For natural advantages the townsite of Polson can not be excelled in the entire country. Situated on a gentle slope, it enjoys a commanding view of the lake, and its limitless dockage facilities give assurance that it will be the shipping point for the farmers, both fruit and grain, that will occupy both the east and west shores. The Pend d'Oreille river, the outlet of Flathead Lake, runs southwest from Polson and gives the city natural drainage facilities that can not be duplicated anywhere in the west.

Beginning at a point within half a mile of the city and extending for a distance of six miles are the Falls of the Pend d'Oreille, destined in a short time to produce a power second to none in the west. Were it destitute of all other advantages, the development of this tremendous power alone would make of Polson a manufacturing city of no mean proportions. The work of developing this power is now under way, the reclamation service having a force of engineers and men at work on the first unit of a series of dams, at a point about one mile from Polson. This dam is an auxiliary of a larger or main plant that will be put in at a point about three miles further south. Some idea of the vast power that will be developed can be gathered when it is learned that these falls, or rapids, have a drop of about 185 feet to the mile. From this source will be generated electricity for the operation of a projected inter-urban road to traverse the lower lake country, for the lighting of Polson, and for the operation of numerous manufacturing plants.

From its position as a trading post Polson has fast developed into a town of great commercial activity, its merchants and business men being among the foremost to be found in their various pursuits. At the present time the city has one bank, three hotels, four general stores, three lumber companies, each maintaining large yards and one a saw

mill at this place; three livery barns, three restaurants, drug store, three barber shops, two blacksmith shops, hardware store, furniture store, harness shop, two meat markets, cabinet maker, carpenter shop, laundry, cigar and confectionery store, etc. In the professions, Polson has three lawyers, one doctor, one surgeon, and one surveyor.

The Northern Idaho & Montana Power Co. is constructing a \$30,000 electric plant in Polson. Already the buildings in the city are wired, poles are up, and the engine and boilers for the plant are now on the power house site, at a point on the lake front a short distance east of the city. It is thought everything will be in readiness and the

west slope of the Rocky Mountains in northwestern Montana. These lands have long been the home of 2200 Flathead, Kootenai, Kalispell and Pend d'Oreille Indians, who have always been noted for their unswerving friendship for the white people. These Indians embraced the Catholic religion many years ago and are still communicants in that church.

Some fifty years ago these tribes claimed all land in Montana west of the main range of the Rocky Mountains, and the northern part of Idaho. About that time they entered into a treaty with the United States by the terms of which they were allowed to choose certain lands in this section for a permanent

great plain of Camas Prairie and the valley of the Little Bitter Root river. This valley is rather narrow but has tributary to it some most excellent bench lands. This upper or northern portion of this valley is quite wide and is the driest section of the reservation. The United States reclamation service has under way plans for the storage of the waters of this river near its source, and the installation of the irrigation system will make these lands very choice, as their present drawback of being hot and dry will become a benefit after the water is conveyed upon them.

This section is now used for grazing purposes and most of the land classified as grazing land is in the

sent messengers two thousand miles to invite missionaries to come and preach to them a new religion. Two of the messengers died soon after reaching St. Louis. What became of the other two was never known. In 1835, a Hiogo named Ignace made the same journey. After waiting in vain a year and a half for the expected missionaries, the Flatheads started a third expedition towards St. Louis, but all the members were murdered by hostile tribes. In 1839 a fourth expedition made the long and perilous trip, this time meeting with success, Father P. J. De Smet coming here the following spring. Thus for eight long years did these children of the Far West labor to bring the white man into their

results attained in the Mission and other valleys of the reservation will exceed those of the Flathead for the reason that the soil is of the same formation, the average rainfall is greater, and the average yearly temperature is ten degrees warmer, insuring a longer growing season and consequently better and larger crops.

The ordinary farmer in the Flathead Valley, with an ordinary season and without irrigation, raises forty bushels of wheat and sixty bushels of oats per acre. The highest known yield of wheat was 76.5 bushels per acre, and of oats was 128 bushels per acre. Wheat varies in price from 70 cents to \$1.00 per bushel and oats from \$1.00 to \$1.25 per cwt. The standard weight of Flathead oats is forty pounds per bushel and some have weighed as high as forty-eight pounds per bushel.

Potatoes will yield from 250 to 400 bushels per acre and sell for about \$1.00 per cwt. Clover grows easily and in abundance and timothy grows six feet tall, with heads eight inches long. Alfalfa does well and yields two and three crops per season. Hay sells at from \$12 to \$20 per ton and is sold locally to the numerous logging camps and mill operators.

Small grains grow especially fine, the oats being very much sought after by the manufacturers of oat meal breakfast food products. All root crops grow easily and to large size, such for instance as turnips, rutabagas, carrots, mangel wurzel and beets, both of the common variety and those used for manufacture of sugar. Ordinary garden vegetables such as beans, peas, radishes, lettuce, etc., grow as well as anywhere in the United States. The soil is a black, sandy loam, several feet deep, and as it is very loose and mellow, it yields readily to tillage and does not bake, pack or form in hard clods. The land is rolling and free from stones and alkali. The geologists say that the Flathead and Mission valleys were formerly covered by Flathead Lake, and the receding waters have left the two valleys as now outlined, with their extreme fertility as the result of the deposits of silts in former times from those waters.

Striking an average of yields and prices per acre for the past few years in the Flathead Valley, under the supervision of intelligent farmers, the following results are obtained:

Wheat, 40 bushels at 80c.	\$ 32.00
Oats, 70 bushels (2800 lbs.) at \$1.10 per cwt.	30.80
Rye, 35 bushels at 50c.	17.50
Barley, 50 bushels at 60c.	30.00
Potatoes, 300 bu. (10,800 lbs.) at \$1 per cwt.	168.00

Though a comparatively new industry in this section of Montana, it has been amply demonstrated that fruit growing is one of the most profitable of pursuits. In the Flathead Valley the average yield per acre of a good orchard, under intelligent management, without irrigation, and with mature trees, is as follows:

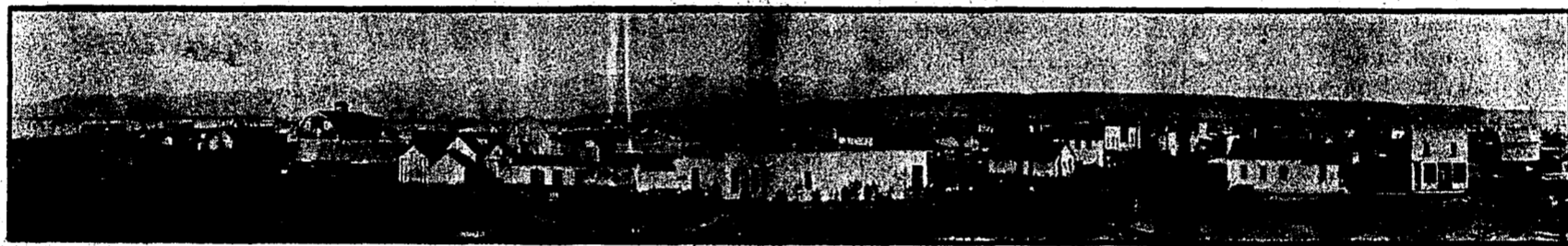
Apples, 500 boxes at \$1.00	\$ 500
Pears, 500 boxes at \$1.25	625
Plums, 720 crates at 75c.	540
Peaches, 600 crates at 80c.	480
Apricots, 600 crates at 80c.	480
Crabs, 720 boxes at 85c.	612
Cherries, 10,200 quarts at 8c.	1526

The above estimate on cherries takes into consideration an average of both sweet and sour varieties. The sweet cherries taken alone will show a higher revenue.

All of the smaller fruits, such as raspberries, strawberries, currants and gooseberries, do equally well and bring in large returns.

While the agriculturist of the lower lake country will be helped because of the milder climatic conditions prevalent here, the greater benefit will be felt by the fruit grower in that the fruit will mature quicker, the yield will be larger, and the danger of having the crop ruined by killing frosts will be greatly lessened if not entirely eliminated.

VIEW OF THE CITY OF POLSON AS IT IS TODAY, TAKEN FROM THE ROOF OF THE GRANDVIEW HOTEL



(From photo by Drum of Kalispell)

On its first anniversary The Sentinel will reproduce a similar picture showing the growth of the city in one year.

power turned on within six weeks or two months.

The best means of judging as to the commercial importance of a city is through comparison of its bank deposits, and in this regard Polson makes an exceptionally good showing and one in which it takes a pardonable pride. Considerably less than one year ago Mr. C. B. Harris, president of the Kalispell National Bank, opened in this place the First Bank of Polson. Associated with Mr. Harris in the enterprise was Mr. A. W. Pipes, as cashier. The bank was started in February, 1909, with deposits aggregating \$45,000. The business grew from the start, and in April the institution was created into a national bank. At the present time the deposits are just about double what they were when the bank was opened six months since, and the rapid growth of the business has necessitated the employment of an assistant cashier, in the person of Mr. John M. Gordon, formerly of St. Louis, Mo.—all of which demonstrates conclusively the business sagacity of Mr. Harris and associates, and the increasing importance of Polson as a commercial center. The bank is now the First National Bank of Polson, and C. B. Harris is president and A. W. Pipes cashier. The directors are J. L. McIntire, W. E. Wells, J. J. Ober, C. B. Harris, A. W. Pipes.

Of the four general stores in Polson the F. L. Gray Co. is the pioneer, they having purchased the original trading post some six years ago. They were followed later by the C. H. Rakeman store, Ober & Gregg, and the Carter Cash Store. The Gray Co. now conducts a large department store, the firm having just recently moved into a new building erected especially for their large and growing business.

Three boat companies ply Flathead Lake between Polson and Somers, two passenger and freight and one an exclusive passenger line. The Flathead Lake Transportation Co., with home offices at Somers, operate the steamers Montana, Klondyke and Flyer, and the company has large passenger and freight docks at this point. The Big Fork Boat Co. runs the steamer Bigfork, and the Flathead Navigation Co. operate the Mary S. and Eva B.

The Flathead Reservation.
The following story of the Flathead reservation will be of interest not alone to those who were successful in the recent land drawing, but also to those who may contemplate the leasing of some of the valuable lands now held by the Indians:

The Flathead Indian reservation is a body of land with a total area of 1,425,000 acres, located on the

home, at the same time relinquishing all other land claimed by them, to the government. Out of all the territory from which they had the right of selection, they wisely chose the lands now comprising what is known as the Flathead Indian reservation. Until recently, these Indians have successfully resisted all attempts to open these lands for settlement, but they have at last succumbed to the ever increasing land hunger of the white race, and in a few short months the black, upturned sod and the barbed wire fence will take the place of herds of cattle, horses and buffalo, and the picturesque conical tepee of the brave will be succeeded by the shanty of the homesteader. The north boundary of the reservation is about fifteen miles north of the city of Polson, and embraces besides the rich fruit and agricultural lands that border the east and west sides, many valuable islands in the Flathead Lake.

From Polson south to St. Ignace lies the Mission valley, the largest body of arable land on the reservation. This valley is thirty miles in length and fifteen miles in width. The soil is composed of a rich, sandy loam several feet deep, and is free from alkali and other deleterious substances. The soil is of marvelous fertility and strength, and will yield any northern crop in profuse abundance.

Just south of Polson is an elevation from the top of which the homesteader can view the entire valley stretched out before him in a splendid panorama. Groups of horses, cattle, and an occasional buffalo, can be seen, enriching their Indian owners by feeding on the succulent grasses. Each stream can be traced from where it leaves its mountain source, across the valley on its way to the Columbia, by the fringes of timber skirting its edges. To the east the pleased eye is greeted with the regal splendor of the Mission range of the Rockies, covered to the timber line with a heavy mantle of green trees.

This chain of mountains is especially beautiful even in a country where scenery is abundant, and several peaks are said to exceed 10,000 feet in height. The elevation of the valley is 2900 feet. Along the Joeko river, which flows across the southern part of the reservation in a westerly direction, is a very narrow valley, the land of which, though limited in extent, is exceedingly fertile. The Pend d'Oreille river bisects the reservation, flowing from its source at the south end of the lake in a southwesterly direction to its point of confluence with the Clark's Fork of the Columbia. West of the Pend d'Oreille is the

northwestern part of the reservation. With the exception of this portion, the reservation is exceedingly well watered, with numerous streams of pure mountain water, fresh and cold enough to be drunk with relish right from the creek on the warmest summer day. In addition to these streams, most excellent water can be found at from eighteen to thirty feet below the surface. The annual rainfall is fifteen and one-half inches.

Under the law passed by congress opening to settlement the lands of the reservation, the sale of whiskey within the boundaries is prohibited for a period of twenty-five years. Representatives of the Evangelical churches are ready to establish churches as soon as the land is settled. Montana's excellent system of public schools will be extended to keep pace with settlement.

Camas Hot Springs.

The Camas Hot Springs are located on Hot Springs Creek about twenty miles northwest of Polson. There are several springs, the waters of which possess remarkable curative powers, especially for rheumatism, blood diseases and alcoholism. Some of the springs have a temperature of 110 degrees Fahrenheit, and the waters are strongly impregnated with sulphur and other minerals. Hundreds of invalids come here every year to drink these healing waters and bathe in their torrid depths. There are two general stores, a hotel and postoffice at Camas. The government has reserved a quarter of a section of land here for the free use of the public. The location is very beautiful, being at the head of a little valley which opens into the valley of the Little Bitter Root two miles away. Close by are the pine-clad mountains, from which the crystal waters of Hot Springs Creek come rushing over their rocky bed. This is destined to become a popular health resort.

St. Ignace Mission.

The first white people to penetrate the Flathead country were the Jesuit Fathers, and the magnificent church and schools at St. Ignace are living monuments of their labor of love in bringing to the benighted children of the plains the first news of a higher civilization. In 1820 the Flatheads first learned of the Catholic missionaries—the "Black Robes"—from a band of Hiogo Indians, who had journeyed west from Montreal. In 1831 four Flatheads undertook to go to St. Louis for the purpose of inviting the priests to come and teach them the Christian religion. This is probably the only instance in history where a band of savages, so-called,

amidst, suffering great privations and many laying down their lives in the undertaking.

The Jesuit Fathers established a mission church and school at St. Ignace in 1854. The old wooden church, bearing a Latin inscription and the date, 1855, is still standing. The Ursuline Nuns and Sisters of Providence came later and established additional schools here for Indian children. These orders have large buildings and one of the finest churches in the state. The government has granted 960 acres for the support of these eleemosynary institutions.

The Brother in Red.

Of all the Indians who inhabit the west, those living on the Flathead reservation are probably the highest in all points of attainment. Father Lawrence Palladino has this to say of the Flathead Indians of today:

"Instead of a warlike, shiftless people, they are peaceful, kind, temperate, industrious, and stand in respectful fear of their Maker. They read, they write, they till the soil, have their orchards, their cattle and other domestic animals. Some live in comfortable frame buildings; they wear the white man's garb in large numbers; observe the laws of the land; are comparatively free from all immoral practices, and worship God with an unswerving faith and devotion."

Many years ago, Hudson Bay trappers and traders entered the Land of the Flatheads and intermarried with the inhabitants. The numerous mixed bloods, or "breeds" as they are called, are mainly the descendants of these Britishers and French Canadians. Most of the farming is done by them. Some are quite wealthy, having large, well kept farms and herds of live stock, with good, substantial buildings, supplied with many modern conveniences and luxuries.

Farming in Flathead.

A story of the Flathead reservation would be incomplete without some reference to the fertility of the soil, and the ideal conditions, climatic and otherwise, to be found here for farming.

There are already some farms on the reservation, established under the leasing system by white men, and also by a few of the more intelligent Indians. The wheat crop for the last few years has averaged about 175,000 bushels. The best criterion for the farming lands on the reservation is a consideration of the results heretofore accomplished in the Flathead Valley in the vicinity of Kalispell. Under the same system of intensified farming practiced in the Flathead valley, the