

Early Views of the Willamette Valley



Paul Kane

1814

The country is pleasant, thinly shaded with oak, pine, liard, alder, soft maple, ash, hazel, etc. At a short distance are ranges of grassy hills, where not a stick of wood grows; the prospect is delightful in summer, when

blooming and verdant.

--Alexander Henry

1841

...The country [is]

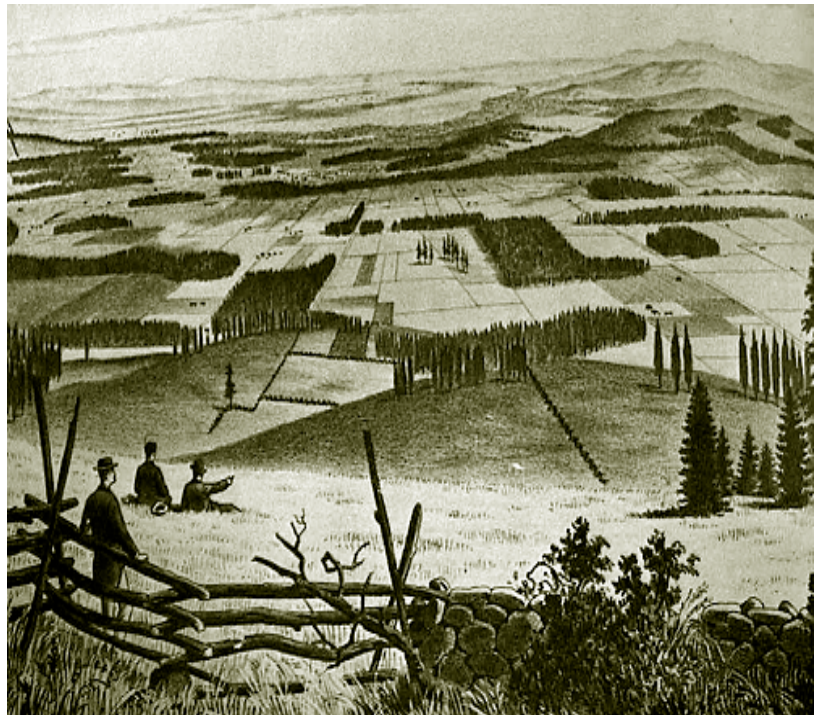
smoky from the annual fires of the Indians

who burn the Prairies to dry and partially cook a sunflower seed - which abounds throughout this portion of the country & is afterwards collected by them in considerable quantities & kept for their winter's stock of food. The forests are also frequently burnt to aid them in entrapping their game - these two burnings combined formed the greatest obstacle the travellers encountered in this country - one blocking the way - & the other destroying the food of the animals [the expedition's horses] ... We passed in going thither, several fine prairies, both high and low...The prairies are at least one-third greater in extent than the forest: they were again seen

carpeted with the most luxuriant growth of flowers

of the richest tints of red, yellow, and blue, extending in places a distance of fifteen to twenty miles. —*Lieutenant Charles Wilkes*

Poster created by Jennifer Gilden, Department of Anthropology, Oregon State University, as part of the OSU-EPA project "Developing Methods and Tools for Watershed Restoration."



Unknown (possibly Henry Warre), 1888

1845

For miles the air seemed to be darked with

immense flights [of waterfowl]

that arose as I proceeded up the valley. The morning being still, their noise was tumultuous and grand...there being probably half a million in sight at one time and all apparently screaming and screeching at once. —*James Clyman*

Mid-1800s

In the early days the

tall, rank grass covered all this valley.

We would turn out our cattle on the valley and they would immediately be lost in the tall grass which reached higher than their backs. In looking for cattle it was impossible to find them by sight. It was necessary to listen for their bells, and when they were lying down to rest during the heat of the day, one might pass within a few feet without finding them. — *Unknown*