

Threshing near Klamath Falls

By Unknown

This postcard shows farmers using a steam-powered thresher near Klamath Falls, which was originally called Linkville. In 1909, the Southern Pacific Railroad reached Klamath Falls, helping attract more settlers to the area. From 1900 to 1910, Klamath County's population jumped from 3,970 to 8,554. Immigrants were also lured by a large-scale federal irrigation project in the Klamath Basin initiated by the 1902 Reclamation Act. Between 1905 and 1962, the engineers of the Klamath Project drained about 110,000 acres of wetlands the region and made the "reclaimed" land available to homesteaders. They also built an extensive system of canals, dikes, and dams and offered summertime irrigation on up to 233,625 acres of land.

One of the earliest areas of "reclaimed" land was in a valley near Klamath Falls. A 1910 government census showed that Timothy grass and alfalfa were the most commonly grown crops in the county. In 1930, the county's population was 32,407 and prominent agricultural products included potatoes, alfalfa, and beef.

Further Reading: Foster, Doug. "Refuges and Reclamation: Conflicts in the Klamath Basin, 1904-1964." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 103, 2002: 150-87.

Robbins, William G. *Landscapes of Promise*. Seattle, Wash., 1997.

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