Klamath Mountains Province

Purpose: To acquaint the student with the Klamath Mtns. region of California.

I. Location and Physical Geography
   A. That region bordered on the north by the Oregon border, south by the Central Valley, west by the narrow North Coast Range, east by the volcanic Southern Cascades.
   B. Geologic Past
      1. Reason for this as a separate region is its physiography.
      2. Coast Range = sedimentary rock
      3. Cascades = recent volcanics
      4. Klamath = most complex Mtns. in the state.
         a. oldest rock = Sierra granitic (K. Mtns. = extension of old Sierra intrusions (about 100,000,000 yrs. old)
         b. Quaternary period = lava covered. Heavily eroded top material. Most old volcanic gone, much of metamorphic rock now at surface.
         c. Much erosion caused by major rivers and heaviest ppt. in California.
   
   REVIEW IGNEOUS, METAMORPHIC, SEDIMENTARY ROCK TYPES

      d. Klamath Mtns. are about the most rugged in California.
      e. steep canyons, fast rivers, much rainfall, snow in highest peaks.
      f. elevations to 9000'
      g. Pleistocene glaciation has left its mark esp. in the Trinity Alps (name says it).
      h. post Pleistocene erosion has removed much of the evidence of glacial landforms. Sierras are a better place to study glacial landforms.
      i. rugged terrain has meant inaccessibility = little development.
      j. 40% of the California River Runoff = Klamath Mtn. Rivers.
   
   They include: Klamath R. - from Columbia Plateau of Oregon.; (Sacramento R. - from a spring at the base of Mt. Shasta not really part of Klamath Mtns. ); the Salmon, Scott, & Trinity Rivers from within the Klamath Mtns. makes this the MOST DISSECTED MTN. LANDSCAPE IN CAL. also ruggedness = difficult to build dams to control and use water.
      k. Ranges = Siskiyou, Marble, Scott, South Fork, Salmon, Trinity, and Trinity Alps. el. avg. 5-7,000' Mt. Eddy 9033'.

II. Cultural Geography
   A. Due to rugged topography = little development.
   B. No interstate or other major hwy. through region.
   C. isolation from urban Cal.
   D. keeps would-be residents away.
   E. Interstate 5 skirts area but most people are only passing through en route to Oregon or south to urban Cal.
   F. Both major roads (255 and 96) are narrow and winding and closed sometimes in winter by snowfall.
   G. Recreation - camping and fishing. Major areas are Shasta-Trinity-Whiskeytown Nat. Rec. Area and Marble Mtn. and Salmon-Trinity Wilderness.
   H. No cities as such in the Klamath Mtns. only small towns. (populations are in the 3000 range)
I. Lumber main industry, plus: ranching, fishing, tourism, recreation, and retirement communities.
J. Very limited agriculture. Exception = Scott Valley area ranching and hay farming.
K. Native Americans = Hoopa Valley Reservation; goes down the Klamath R. to the sea- = largest in Cal. and most prosperous.
L. History - Native Americans
   1. Fish, acorns and game plentiful
   2. Great ethnic complexity
      Athapaskan, Algonquin, Hokan, Yukian and Penutain linguistic groups represented in the area.
   3. Today only 5-6000 live in their homeland.
M. History - Early Settlements
   1. Spain not interested until Russians opened Ft. Ross (1809). Then they founded mission Sonoma in 1823.
   2. Anglo- Americans
      a) Gold - Trinity River 1848 (Scott Valley, Trinity Canyon, & around Weaverville:
         One of worlds largest hydrolic mining operations.
      b) Gold = development of seaports along N. Coast
      c) Many became farmers and stayed after gold played out.
      d) Redwood lumbering 1854 = 7 mills in Eureka.
N. Economy Today
   1. Lumbering = leading statewide. Main reason why Ca. and Wash. are tied for second after Oregon as largest in lumber prod.
      a) Humboldt Co. leader in reserves of standing timber and in state lumber output.
      b) Consuming lumber faster than nature can replace it.
         Ca. Saw timber ( billions of board feet)
         Reserve Annual Cut Annual Growth
         303.91  5.72  3.53
      c) Heyday 1941-55. Since then fewer mills, larger operations, corporate control, automation, land aquisition.
      d) 1/10 of harvest = plywood production.
      e) No more burning waste; sent to Japan for pulp proc.
      f) Redwood - most forests are on private property.
   2. Fishing - ranks below southern and central Cal. in both commercial and sport fishing
      a) chief source for flounder (sole), rockfish, tuna, salmon.
      b) state leader in shellfish - over 1/3 of state total catch in crab, abalone.
   3. Livestock Ranching - land good for little else. Some sheep and cattle - transhumance not practiced as much as was historically.
   4. Mining - Historically - 150 million in gold removed. Not much going on today. Hydrologic mining was legislated out of existence in 1800's.
   5. Commerce
      a) deep sea- Eureka & Cresent City: export wood prod.
      b) poor roads through area
      c) no current railroad operating
         Marin to Eureka 1907; stopped in 1958.
         Skunk RR. diesel-gasoline passanger-freight cars are popular with tourists. 40 mile run Ft. Bragg- Willits
   6. Tourism
      Some state parks and beaches, good hunting & fishing etc

END