

There are 15 small towns or white settlements on the reservation. A list of these towns is given on page 8. Polson is the largest. It has a population of 2100 people. It is located on the south shore of Flathead Lake. Roman with a population of 1500 is most centrally located with respect to roads, etc. It was named after Agent Peter Roman who was in charge of the Indian Agency from 1873 to 1893. A list of Superintendents since 1859 is given on page 8.

More Indians live in or near the town of St. Ignatius, than in any other village or settlement on the reservation. This town is the home of the old Catholic Mission first established in 1854. It consists now of an Indian school and hospital in addition to the regular church activities, and also includes a large farm and dairy.

The only other locality on the reservation where the Indians are grouped to any extent is in the vicinity of Big Arm or Elmo. Most of what is left of the Kootenai band live in this locality.

Climate:

The climate of the Flathead Reservation is not severe. The mean annual rainfall in the valleys ranges from 12 to 25 inches. See page 11 for actual rainfall since 1909. It is distributed fairly uniformly throughout the year. The temperature ranges from minus 24 degrees to 98 degrees. The annual mean temperature for 1943 was 43.6°. The frost free season ranges from 116 to 136 days. The heaviest snowfall recorded in the valleys is 37.3 inches. The principal crops grown are grain, hay, peas, and sugar beets.

The reservation is mountainous. The mountains are covered with timber. But the floor of the valleys is fairly flat with some rolling hills. Irrigation is practiced extensively on the flatter lands, but good wheat crops are grown on some of the more productive soils without irrigation.

It is said that the mountains and hills of this region were formed by upheavals and folding of the earth's crust, followed by a period of volcanic action, which in turn was followed by a glacial age. The glaciers rounded off the hills, formed the small ponds or "pot-holes" and left what is called the Post Creek and Polson moraines.

Most of the soils have developed in place by the natural weathering of the parent rock or materials. Very little alluvial soil is present. What there is consists of recently accumulated stream-laid sediments. But the native soils have developed under a fairly heavy prairie grass vegetation and are dark colored and well supplied with organic matter. The lighter colored soils include those in the Lonepine and Round Butte areas. They are important in the production of alfalfa and grass lands for livestock.

Land Tenure:

About one-half of the land in the Flathead Reservation is held in trust by the United States for the Indians. The other half is in white ownership and non-trust status. In addition to the "trust lands" the government has reserved approximately 60,000 acres for wildlife refuges, reservoir sites, agency reserves, power reserves, etc. Some use by the Indians is permitted on a part of these reserves, particularly the power reserves, but all of these reserved lands are not to be considered a part of the Indian land holdings.