

## OUT ON THE RANGE

# Palouse Country

Words & photos © Todd Klassy.

**T**he green rolling hills of the Palouse region in eastern Washington and north-central Idaho are one of the most beautiful and distinctive landscapes anywhere in the United States. About 150 miles north of the Oregon Trail, the Palouse is likely named after the Palus Indian tribe that once lived here. “Palus” means “land with short and thick grass,” fitting for such a green and lush and sumptuous landscape. Over time,

Palus changed to “Palouse.”

The Palouse experienced some growth in the late 19th century. It includes more than 18,000 square miles of fertile agricultural and grazing land that is covered with a wonderful tapestry of farms and ranches.

It is thought the hills formed when a gigantic ice-age dam collapsed in western Montana. It unleashed a deluge of water, carrying with it the rich topsoil of the region and



depositing it here like the ripples of sand you see created by ocean waves on a beach.

No other place in America resembles it, but some say it looks like the rural Tuscan region in Italy. The only difference? The Palouse is far less known. Which is probably a good thing. But now you know. ■

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FROM TOP LEFT: Ten-year-old Libby loves ranch life, especially working with the horses. ▶ The youngest of Paul's children, Jennifer has taken over the Paradox operation with the aim of securing a legacy of ranching for generations to come. ▶ Charlie with his ram lambs from the "super" herd, ca. 1967. ▶ At seven, Beckton is an expert at driving cows on his four-wheeler. ▶ Jennifer, Beckton, Libby and Sidney stand in front of the barn that has hosted the annual Redd Ranches bull sale for nearly a century.

in this creed every day, working every aspect of the ranch. Whether assisting with artificial insemination, feeding, or moving the herd to a new pasture, Libby loves working with the cows. Sidney and Libby push cows on horseback, while Beckton dominates on his four-wheeler. Sidney appreciates the unique opportunities that few, if any, of her peers enjoy. She says, "I don't know anyone else who can hop on a horse or a four-wheeler and just ride around and call it work." Beckton seems to like it all, even the grimy tasks. He and Libby want to stay with the ranch when they grow up, but Sidney is keeping her options open. "I would like to do other things, but if no one else takes it over or my mom can't do it anymore, I would do it."

### Replenishing the Earth

Paradox is nestled near the Utah border in one of the driest regions of Colorado. Where Jennifer has placed and replaced pivots, emerald green pastures dotted with cows and calves are a tarn of cool surrounded by burnished sandstone cliffs of crimson, coral and plum. Jennifer is on a crusade to replenish this parched earth with every drop of water she can gather.



We're learning whether or not we can survive without Grandma and Grandpa."

### Forward with Faith

Seeds of faith planted long ago have deep roots in this generation of Redds. As members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Jennifer and her kin apply their faith in matters both spiritual and practical. She is forthcoming about her vulnerabilities.



"Life is always on your mind because you're working with life



"A lot of this land wasn't being irrigated when I got here, and now we're irrigating 700 acres," she says. "I don't want to sound cheesy, but it's almost like the earth has a spirit and was saying 'thank you' when we started giving it water. The hope is that the ranch is still around in 20 years, and even better than it is now. This is so hard for me, but by me putting in the new irrigation systems and improving the ranch, it's going to be so much easier for my kids."

These three generations of Redds live in the historic ranch house at the west end of Paradox Valley. In recent months, Diane suffered a disabling stroke and Paul has endured his own health setbacks. "It's neat for my kids to have their grandparents in their life, but when they're in the hospital, there's a hole

and death every day," she says. "A lot of the time I'm working alone, so if anything goes wrong.... I pray over hooking up a trailer. We pray over the animals. We pray for moisture. It's the foundation for everything we do. I think faith is the only way to keep going in this business. Without it, it would be too frustrating and too easy to give up."

With confidence that her choice to take on the ranch and bull operation is the right one, Jennifer has never looked back. She and her little family are immersed in doing whatever it takes to be successful. "I have this ranch and I've got to take care of it, give the animals every chance to be the best they can be and give the land every chance to be the best it can be. That can sometimes mean a lot of pressure, but we have to do our part." ■