

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

KITTY WILKINS DIAMOND RANCH

Number 978

January 1993

Although most Owyhee country ranchers preferred large cattle herds, Kitty Wilkins (1857-1936) specialized in horses that she exported to midwestern markets in places like Omaha, St. Louis, Sioux City, and Chicago. Becoming a horse owner when she was only two years old (through an investment her father made for her in Oregon), she gradually developed a lucrative business based on her Diamond Ranch not far from Bruneau. A lot of wild horse stock was available, but she upgraded her large herd (that grew to thousands of animals) by purchasing stallions of notable breeds--such as Hambletonians, Percherons, and Morgans. United States cavalry needs gave her a major market, but auctions for farm areas distributed still more. Long freight trains hauled her herds from Mountain Home to distant distributing centers for two decades, and some of her premium horses joined Buffalo Bill Cody's wild west show. Many others were featured in rodeo performances. After 1920, large horse markets declined and Kitty Wilkins retired to a mansion in Glens Ferry. Diamond Ranch, though, preserves most of its original setting.

(This information has not been edited.)

Publications--450 N. 4th Street, Boise, ID 83702--208-334-3428