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REPORT ON AN OLD CLAY PIT NEAR LA GRANDE

About seventy years ago building bricks and tile drains were made from clay dug on the old Grismett ranch near Mount Glenn. According to Judge J. D. Slater, it was excellent brick and tile. Some of the buildings in old La Grande were built with it. From what I could learn, this industry was carried on for ten or fifteen years and was discontinued only because the making of it was too difficult. There was practically no machinery available at that time. The clay was never used for making pottery.

At present, farming is carried on over the pit. It is located on the farm adjoining the present Grover Grismett ranch. The only living person who could show you its location is Mrs. Fred J. Holmes, 1702 Fourth Street La Grande. She is seventy eight years old and the daughter-in-law of the Mr. Grismett who started making the brick. Her first husband, when a young man, fired the furnaces for his father.

I talked to Mrs. Grismett and she said she would be very glad to guide members of the State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries to the location.

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In finding the above information, I learned of two deposits in which you may be interested:

Our physics professor here, Mr. E.E. Badgley reports a deposit of kaolin or talc which was uncovered recently when making a rifle range on the ranch of Loyd B. Pierce. This ranch is located on the foothill road between La Grande and Hot Lake. The rifle range can be seen from the road. Mr. Badgley has not tested this material but was quite sure it was kaolin or talc.

Judge Slater reports an extensive deposit of a chalky substance which was used in the past as a cleaner or polisher. This is located along the banks of the Grande Ronde River between La Grande and Hilgard.

These might possibly be worth investigating.

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