

J. R. MAXWELL PIONEER OIL DISTRIBUTOR

La Grande Man Entered
Business First in Idaho
Early in 1908

LOCAL COMPANY
GROWING RAPIDLY

Thirteen Towns Served—
Island City to Get New
Storage Tanks—Ware-
houses Going Up.

T. R. Maxwell, manager of the Fletcher Oil company here, is among the pioneer oil men in this section, having been in this business since 1908—over a period of eighteen years. He was connected with oil companies for thirteen years before becoming manager of the Fletcher company, which is at present one of the most prosperous concerns operating in this territory.

Mr. Maxwell came west to Idaho, June 5, 1908, from Waynesville, North Carolina, immediately after finishing high school on May 28 of the same year. He stopped at Boise, Idaho, where in August of the same year he started working for the Continental Oil company, driving a one-horse tank wagon there and at Nampa. He had never driven a horse before this time. He sold about two times the amount of kerosene as gasoline during the first few years of his employment for the company, also many candles. In those days electricity was not so popular and kerosene lamps and candles were used for lighting purposes. There were thirty-seven automobiles in Boise at that time and thirty at Nampa.

Transferred to La Grande

Mr. Maxwell was employed with the Continental company for nine years. The headquarters of the company were at Denver, Colorado. In 1914 he sold the Fletcher company of Idaho its first gallon of gasoline. In 1917 he went to Pendleton, where he was employed for one year for the Standard Oil company. He was transferred by that company to La Grande, where he worked for it for a period of three years. He was an employee of that company in 1920, during the gas shortage, when oil companies suffered tremendously. "It was during that year that the Fletcher Oil company furnished about ten tank cars of gasoline for La Grande when it could not be obtained from other sources."

First Company Incorporated

The Fletcher Oil company started operating here in June 1921, and has grown rapidly during the five years of its existence. The company was the first independent oil company incorporated under the laws of Oregon. The owners of the concern are D. S. Fletcher and E. O. Fletcher, both of Boise, Idaho and Mr. Maxwell. The Fletcher company has been operating at Boise, Idaho since 1914, but its company is separate from the La Grande concern, the company here being strictly local, except that the two companies buy jointly.

When the Idaho company first started operating it was a small concern, distributing to only a few towns near Boise. At present it operates in 55 different towns in Idaho.

The first shipment of oil ordered by the local company in July 1921 was for fifty gallons of Vellux Motor oil. By February 1922 the sixth tank car of lubricating oil had been ordered. Since July 1922 all shipments of lubricating oil have been 5,000 or 10,000 gallon tanks.

Receive Oils From East

The Fletcher company was the first in Eastern Oregon to ship Paraffine base-oil, or Eastern oil in bulk. Most shipments to La Grande from the east are made in steel barrels, adding the expense of the barrel, the cost of barreling and the cost of shipment to the price of the oil. Some shipments are sent through the Panama canal to Portland and shipped to Eastern Oregon from there. Fletcher now receives all lubricating oil from the east in tank cars and in this way are able to save money for the local people. This company is the only one in Oregon to receive eastern oil this way, according to Mr. Maxwell.

The company gets its gasoline from Parco, Wyoming. Lubricating oils come from Minnesota and from Oil City, Pennsylvania and Elkhart, Oklahoma. A complete line of oil is sold wholesale by the company here, including kerosene, gasoline, lubricating oils, and candles. Only one grade of gasoline—U. S. Navy specifications—has been handled by the company since 1921. This gas tests 55 to 60 gravity.

When the concern was first started here it began tank-wagon service to all surrounding towns, giving to the benefit of prices paid for the oils in La Grande. Two oil tanks—located at Island City—were owned by the company at first. Since then they have added two more tanks there, also branches at Pendleton and Union. There is at present two large tanks at Pendleton and also at Union.

Plans More Storage Tanks

The company plans to put in additional storage tanks at Island City soon to handle three or four tank cars of oil or around 15,000 gallons, for distribution to other stations.

It is also considering building a large warehouse and service station at Pendleton this spring. A new warehouse 24 by 33 feet is

Maxwell



T. R. Maxwell, of the Fletcher Oil company, who entered the business in 1908.

The Old Trail served in saving the "Oregon country" to the United States, it became the world's most historic highway. "The Road That Won an Empire."

Then came the celebrated pilgrimage in 1843 from Fort Hall to Walla Walla, the migration which brought 10,000 men, women and children and clinched forever the right of the United States to the Oregon country by right of actual occupation of bona fide settlers. In 1847 the Mormons covered a por-

tion of the trail on their pilgrimage to Great Salt Lake. In 1849 came the great rush of the gold-seekers. Three years later witnessed the greatest migration of homesteaders.

Price in Life High.

The old Oregon Trail was not laid out by engineers, no grades were established, no streams were bridged, but it wound its way the best it could across the hills. In the spring, when the hills were green with verdure, the old trail was one of adventure, romance and hope; but when the torrid sun of summer beat down, the grass withered, the game departed and the trail became a way of hardship, suffering and death.

As the Burlington was building its line along the Platte a crew of engineers stumbled upon a lonely little grave in the sagebrush and across it was a rusted wagon tire, on which were cut the words, "Rebecca Winters, age 50 years."

"Boys," said the leader, "we'll turn aside. Here, close by the trail, her grave shall stay. For she came first in this desert wide."

Rebecca Winters holds right of way!"

And so the line of a great railroad was turned to the west that she might lie in peace in the little grave she had occupied for so many years, for she came with the Mormon migration in 1847. It was an army of peace that came to subdue the wilderness, but its casualties were greater than those of many a battlefield. It has been estimated that for each mile of the trail seventeen persons paid the price for the winning of the "Oregon country."

Sultor: May I marry your daughter?

Auto Dealer (absently): Yes, but I can't guarantee delivery until 1927.—Life.

Looking Along Second Street



Here is a view of one of La Grande's many paved streets, which make driving a pleasure throughout the city. In the distance is the Second street viaduct, which crosses the O-W. tracks, doing away with grade crossing dangers. This formerly connected with the Old Oregon Trail highway and was part of the west entrance to the city, but since the building of the new approach past Gangloff park and the Grande Ronde hospital, the street resumes its place with others tributary to the main streets.

TRAFFIC COPS' BURDEN LIGHT

It's really remarkable the way Oregon motorists show their readiness to comply with the traffic regulations," declared a state traffic officer the other day when he stopped for a chat with the reporters.

"Now, there's that new light adjustment law, for instance. It hits every car owner financially,

and yet almost everybody is trying to conform with it.

"Once in a while we pick up an offender, but usually he has committed an unintentional violation. Some people forget that when they put in new bulbs, they have to have readjustment—unless, of course, they use fixed-focus bulbs. Vibration often jars the lights out of focus. And then again, perhaps the owner has attempted to move the front of his car and found the radiator too hot to touch. The natural place to take hold then is the light fixture."

Road Hogs Disappearing

The officer paused to light a cigarette, and flipped his match at the ash tray.

"You don't hear much kick about speeding any more. As for

road-hogs, they've about disappeared. Most drivers are pretty decent about giving the other fellow half of the road.

"People ought to be a little more thoughtful about parking, however. You're not supposed to park on the highway if your car is able to move under its own power, unless you have a flat tire. It isn't so bad to park on the highway where the traffic is light if you find a place where the road is clear and without corners or curves for 200 or more feet in each direction. That gives anyone approaching plenty of time to swing out."

Auto Drivers Gone.

"Auto drivers are a thing of the past in this country. Even the driver from the brush knows the

traffic rules for the highway. The signs along the roads and those on the pavement help a lot there. Anyone can get a copy of the traffic rules by addressing the secretary of state.

"Certificates of title, drivers' licenses and receipts of registration." The officer pleaded his forehead as he worried his hair with his gloved hand.

"If people only understood that those things are for their own protection," he continued earnestly, "they wouldn't consider them such a nuisance."

Certificate Big Help.

"A certificate of title is really a great help in catching an automobile thief. If a man steals a car in Oregon, he is pretty apt to get caught if he tries to drive it in the state, because he can't register it without a certificate of title, and if he can't show a certificate of title and his registration receipts, he is liable to arrest. Oregon is one of the first states to adopt this means of protection."

"Most persons have got into the habit of carrying their driver's licenses."

"By the way," added the cop as he prepared to leave, "if you've lost your license you'd better send to the secretary of state for a new one, because if you're taken up you won't have time to get it replaced before the trial."

"I've got to buy a new tube."

"Radio?"

"No, auto."

"That reminds me; my battery is run down."

"Auto?"

"No, radio."

"I've got three thousand miles on mine without a bit of trouble."

"Six thousand on mine easy."

"Your radio?"

"No, my auto."

"Dammit! Let's change the mixture."—Bill Rykes.

HOW MUCH ARE YOU WORTH?



Whether your wealth is little or great, you can't afford to lose everything you have--- you can't afford to pay judgment for \$500, for \$5,000, or for \$20,000.

You can't afford to jeopardize your accumulation of money or possessions, or any part of it, just because you may be unfortunate in an automobile accident. If you killed someone or crippled someone for life, what chance would you have in court to protect your estate? Would you have to fight your own battle or would you have the backing of a big insurance company who would be obligated to pay the loss?

COMPLETE AUTOMOBILE COVERAGE IS JUST AS NECESSARY AS LIFE INSURANCE!

When you buy life insurance, you are protecting your family against the loss of your earning power—you are seeking to provide them with an estate. When you have complete automobile insurance coverage, you are protecting them and YOURSELF against the loss of that which you have already accumulated. When you are insured in one of our strong companies, you can have complete confidence that your interests will be given the utmost attention.

Accidents WILL happen when least expected. Of course you want protection from fire or from theft—but more than that, you want protection in case you wreck another car, in case you wreck your own, in case you injure someone. The cost is extremely low considering the assurance that such a policy will give you. Be sure that you get COMPLETE coverage in a STRONG, RECOGNIZED company. Our reputation for service is behind every policy we write. Let us talk to you about it.

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