Over The Valley

Mabel E. Morton, Valley News Editor

OVER THE VALLEY

Bird Dog After Chickens—

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Keefer, of Imbler, lost about 50 of their white leghorn chickens one day last week, when their trained bird dog got into the flock and made quick work of the half hundred fowls.

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County Agent Visits—

D. E. Stevens, county agent of Morrow county was here last week visiting among his friends out through the valley.

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Move to Miller Ranch—

Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Jones have moved, this summer, to the S. E. Miller home ranch three miles west of Union. They are not in any way connected with the operation of the Miller farm but merely occupy the house, have their garden, pasture etc. Mrs. Jones' father, W. R. Gilkison, of Baker, is visiting her for several weeks, having been motored to Union by his other daughter, Mrs. J. A. Clark and her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Ira VanLewsin, all of Baker.

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Plan Old Folks Picnic—

August 11th is date announced for the annual party given for the older people of the Cove community by the members of the Women's club. The hour is set for the afternoon and the place, Ascension park, which lends itself so well for such an event. This affair, which is given annually, is looked forward to by all the residents over 60 years of age, and not only those residing in the Cove at present, but former residents. Many such are planning to return this year. It is possible that no very formal programme will be given, but instead the more informal features which are always so enjoyable. The members of the Junior club may repeat the play which they recently gave "Now And Then."

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Spend Sunday near Haines—

A group of valley people drove to Haines Sunday and spent the day, meeting there several car loads of people from Baker county. The original plan had called for a day in the open but the heavy rain coming just at noon called for a readjustment of the plans, making the day none the less enjoyable, however. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Loennig opened their beautiful country home, which accommodated the company of between 25 and 40, splendidly. Those participating in the dinner, served buffet style, were Mr. and Mrs. Henry Avery and daughters, Harriet Anne and Kathryn of Island City, Mr. and Mrs. Frank McKennon, son, Russell and daughter, Frances, Mr. and Mrs. Booth McKennon and daughter, Evelyn, Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Ledbetter, daughters, Eva, Edna and Marie and sons, Glenn and Lyle of Alicel, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Huron and daughter, Elizabeth, of Imbler, Mabel Morton of La Grande, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wright and son, Gordon and daughter, Virginia of Baker, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Loennig and sons, Roger and Carl and daughter, Beatrice, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Loennig of Haines.

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Managing Dairy Farm—

Mr. and Mrs. O. H. Taylor, are living on the old Hempy farm four miles west of Union, running a dairy for Will Woodruff, who lives on the farm across the road. The Taylors are milking, at present 47 head of cows every day, Jerseys, the cream being sold sweet and commanding the best market price. The combination of dairy cattle, hogs and chickens is well established by Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, Mr. Taylor having a fine bunch of Poland China hogs and Mrs. Taylor a flock of several hundred chickens. Mrs. Taylor has a good strain of Rhode Island Reds, her experience having been, she says, that this is the best all round farm chicken. Most of the feed for the cattle is raised on the farm.

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Inspection Tour—

Carlton Appleby was a visitor over the valley yesterday and inspected the various rabbitries, etc., along the way. He was delighted with Lyle Ledbetter's chinchilla rabbits, wanted all of the eight new baby kittens on the Ledbetter farm, contracted to buy the $500 colt of Mr. Ledbetter, agreeing to pay $3 spot cash, fed Clifford Conrad's tame deer, O. K'ed Clifford's fine litter of pigs, which Clifford is expecting to take to the state fair, and learned a great deal in general about farms and farming. Carlton is proudly four years old.

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Runaway Averted—

Some of the farmers and business men who participated in the farm tour conducted under the auspices of the county agent last Friday had a regular thrill at the Ray Norvat farm on Pumpkin Ridge operated by P. H. Hayes. The men were standing near a 16-horse combine, when one of the horses became too skittish and started to run off, taking the other animals of course and the machine down hill. Fortunately before they had gone any distance they ran into a 4-horse loading team and were stopped. Had it not been for this, the whole affair might have resulted quite disastrously.

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Thinning Apples—

Along Brookes' Lane, the apple orchard row, immediately north of Sommerville, orchardists are very busy right now thinning the apples. This is one of the most tedious, most costly and longest-drawn-out tasks in connection with the raising of a crop of apples, they tell us.

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Stop Here For Visit—

Mrs. Gerald Tuttle and daughter, of Spokane, were here last week visiting with Mrs. John Tuttle of north of Imbler, and among their friends in that vicinity. They were on their way from Spokane to Yellowstone Park on a vacation motor trip.

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Wolf Dist. Farmers Tour—

Farmers in Wolf Creek school district are on a tour of inspection today under the supervision of county agent Avery. The three things they are interested in particularly are certified potato seed, 2-ply barley and a comparison of Federation wheat and Hard Federation.

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Entertains Island Bridge Club—

Mrs. Fred Kiddle, Island City, used beautiful garden flowers in mixed varieties for the attractive decorations about her home Friday afternoon when she had for her guests the members of the Island City Bridge club. There were two tables at play during the afternoon, Mrs. Will Mitchell making the highest score.

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Visiting at Sumter—

Miss Anna Brooks of north of Imbler has gone to Sumter where she will make an extended stay with relatives. She was accompanied by her nephew, Bobbie Huron, who will spend about two weeks at Sumter.

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Second Inspection This Month—

Prof. G. R. Hyslop, professor of farm crops at O. A. C. will be in this county again later this month for the purpose of inspecting for the second time those patches of potatoes up for certification for seed potatoes. The last inspection will come after the spuds are in the bins. Prof. Hyslop was here a few weeks ago, making the first inspection. He was obliged to leave before his work was completed, and county agent Avery finished the job passing favorably on some 19 patches, subject to Prof. Hyslop's approval at the time of his coming visit. A field tour for potato growers is also being planned, in which probably 25 potato growers will share. This will be a comparatively short trip, but will be very important to those interested.

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Witherspoon and Weatherspoon—

Two men up toward the northern part of the county, each an expert in his own line are J. E. Witherspoon and H. H. Weatherspoon. J. E. Witherspoon is an expert and progressive farmer, while H. H. Weatherspoon is the big apple man. In the recent story of the 226 acre apple orchard, misinformation made the operator and owner to be "J. E. Weatherspoon." County Agent Avery is responsible for the statement that the Weatherspoon orchard has the most promise of any in Eastern Oregon and possibly in the entire state. One of the most beautiful things seen on the recent farm tour was the 16 acre tract on the Witherspoon farm which is in yellow blossomed sweet clover. Last Friday it was simply one great yellow mass of blooms and was attractive, to say the least.

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Entertains Sister—

Mrs. Chris Bertsch, Mill Creek road, near Cove, has as here house guest for a couple of weeks her sister, Mrs. Hulda Steffan of La Grande.

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Wheat Inspection Coming—

N. C. Donaldson, county agent of Wallowa county is expected in this week, and in conjunction with County Agent Avery, will inspect wheat grown in this locality for certification of seed. Of the winter wheats they will inspect the varieties, Hybrid No. 128 and Forty-fold.

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Eradicating Morning Glories—

A very good example of what can be accomplished by keeping right after an obnoxious weed was illustrated to visitors at the farm of Nothnagel Bros. near Alicel last Friday. Success in getting control of and eradicating morning glories was demonstrated. The fields where the weeds had gained some headway were treated last year, consequently proper results could be seen this year.

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Plan Extended Vacation—

Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Lincoln and family of near Cove are planning an extensive motor trip, which they plan to take within the next few weeks. They plan to go first to Eugene to attend the Lincoln family reunion. This is a very large affair which has been built up over a long period of years and which is attended by relatives and connections of the family from all over the country, east and west. This reunion will be an event of August 14th. From there they expect to drive on to the coast for an indefinite stay and later may go on down into California.

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Visits Her Daughter—

Mrs. W. R. Ledbetter is spending this week visiting with her daughter, Mrs. Henry Loenig, who lives near Haines. Miss Eva Ledbetter, who spent last week with her sister returned home Sunday.

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Has Fine Litter of Pigs—

Clifford Conrad certainly has a fine litter of Chester White pigs which he is getting ready for the State Fair at Salem, two months away. There are 14 fine pigs in the lot, two of the 16 in the original litter having been lost when they were quite small. The animals will weigh around 125-150 pounds at present, and Clifford, by consistent feeding, is hoping to see an average gain of three pounds per day. The present rations consist of chopped wheat, 15 gallons of milk, 1½ pounds fish meal and some potassium iodide, each day, besides good pasture and water. Clifford is a very enthusiastic Pig Club members. In entering his pigs at Salem, Clifford will go after the award offered for the most pork from one litter. For five years, either Clifford, or his father, T. E. Conrad, has had the Grand Champion sow of all breeds at the Union County Stock Show.

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Have Guests From Enterprise—

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mueggler and their three children from Enterprise were week end guests of Mr. and Mrs. Chris Bertsch of above Cove. They returned to their home Sunday evening, as did Mrs. Hulda Steffan, Mrs. Bertsch's sister.

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Fire at Road Camp—

What might have proven to be a very serious fire occurred one evening last week at the Government Road Maintenance Camp, four or five miles above Cove. The camp is located at the mill site and the temporary buildings used to accommodate the seven or eight men working on the roads are quite close to the mill, which has not been in operation for some time. Men in the camp discovered the fire at about two o'clock in the morning and when discovered the building used for a kitchen and mess house was in a mass of flames. Quite close to it was the building used to store all supplies, and the blaze was so close to its only door, that it was impossible to remove anything from the building. The men formed a bucket brigade and confined the fire to these two buildings, the loss being estimated as around $200 or $400. The men were considerably handicapped by the loss of their provisions, cooking equipment and utensils. Old lumber etc., on the mill site made it easy for the fire to spread and it is quite fortunate that the flames did not travel to the mill. The group of men have been working for several weeks now on this particular road, making repairs of the present road, and extending it farther out toward the summit. It will require about five miles of new road to go clear to the summit and will then give a road over to the Little Minam.

First Printing Press Packed To Helena, Mont.

A conversation with George Gray, probably Union county's oldest pioneer, certainly makes one feel his debt of everlasting gratitude to those sturdy pioneers, the men and women who had to do everything for the first time, and that word "first" how often it was used; first trail, first house, first school, first plow, first mower, first grain sowed, first claim. Perhaps one of the most interesting bits Mr. Gray had to tell about, was the fact that while he was driving a mule freight train, he packed the first printing press that was ever in Helena, Montana. The press, which weighed 3000 pounds, was brought by boat on the Columbia and Snake rivers to Lewiston, Idaho. There it had to be transferred to the mule packs and taken across the country to Helena.

Mr. Gray drove one of these pack trains for three years or so. All sorts of equipment, provisions, supplies, etc., were taken, chiefly to the different mining camps, and a charge of 50 cents per pound was made for such transportation.

One season, Mr. Gray had the job of keeping one large camp supplied with beef. A large corral was built and he was to keep in it enough cattle for fresh meat. He says that from May to November he placed within its confines 1400 animals.

It takes considerable imagination to picture the route traversed by Mr. Gray, acquainted as we are with the cities, towns, villages, communities and much more so as motoring for longer or shorter distances has come to be so common. Last week, it was told how the company with whom the Gray family was traveling saw no community from the time they left the Grande River until they reached the Willamette valley. There was no track whatsoever of Pendleton. At one time Mr. Gray was driving a herd of cattle from Corvallis over to eastern Oregon. When he had gone about 30 miles from home, he was obliged to stop and camp in one locality for about a week. That locality is what is now East Portland, now so widely built up. When he came into this Grande Ronde valley, his party crossed over the mountains from where Kamela is now situated, and came down into Old Town. Just the faintest beginning of La Grande was in evidence.

In all of his traveling, Mr. Gray says that the Indians bothered him little. Once or twice they "got after" him, but he was never harmed. He tells of one time when a company of them were captured in the Harney section. They were taken to Boise City and placed in a stockade, which was built of 20-foot lumber placed on end, but the Indians all made a safe get-away. He speaks very highly of the representatives of the Hudson Bay Co. who then had posts at Oregon City and Vancouver, Wash. Of all the men the emigrants came in contact with, they received the best treatment at the hands of the Hudson Bay folks.

Mr. Gray has never been back to his old home among the southern mountains. In fact he has never gone farther east than Helena, has never re-crossed the Rocky mountains. They came west because at that time there was no money in the east or middle west, and the west offered something. He added, however, that even with the country which they found with all its possibilities, the early settlers would probably have not been satisfied even here, but would have been going yet, had there been no ocean.

When Mr. Gray was 21 years of age, in 1861, he came into this valley, secured considerable land and settled down. He cleared the land, planted crops, raised cattle, made his splendid contribution toward the building up of agriculture in the valley and for 66 years has kept on making that contribution. Two years ago, he had a very severe illness and since that time he has been considerably limited physically. Up to that time, his endurance was much greater than many of a younger generation, he could get on his horse and drive way into the mountains, as he had done for years by the score, and where he was a very familiar figure. He had a reputation for breaking broncbos which was unequalled in this section.

On Washington's Birthday of 1874, Mr. Gray was married to Miss Vina Jasper, who had come into this valley with her parents from the Willamette valley. They went to housekeeping on the farm where they now live and that has been their continuous home ever since. They were the parents of ten children, three of whom are deceased. The children all live in the Cove vicinity — Mrs. Frank Conley, George, Mrs. Anna Miller, Mrs. Bessie Childers, Joe, Nathan and Mrs. Billie Millering.

STORY OF OLD RED PEPPER SCHOOL IS TOLD BY MR. CARTER

Over toward Cove, some forty years ago, or thereabouts, there was a certain school district whose fame was spread all over the county. It seems rather coincidental that today all of the officers of this district are still living and still contributing their share towards the community's welfare. Upon the request of the valley editor, M. L. Carter, of Alicel, has written very interestingly this story of Red Pepper.

"The story of old Red Pepper is not a real pioneer story, but rather of a later date, which might be designated more properly as the early settler period. Red Pepper school was, at one time, the most noted country school in Union county.

"M. L. Carter settled on the south end of the Sandridge, near the "Hat" lake, in 1879; A. R. Conley and C. W. Hamilton, in 1880 and George Miller in 1882. Oliver Perrin had lived in this part of the valley for some years previous to any of the above named persons. In 1887, just 40 years ago, a movement was started to form a school district. George Miller, taking a lead in the matter, didn't believe in slighting his neighbors, so he included within the boundaries of the proposed new district, all adjoining lands outside of other districts. This soon brought a strong protest from the Moss', Pennington, Oliver and other families on the west who wished to form a district of their own. Consequently the district was divided, leaving Red Pepper district on the east, No. 73, and the Valeria district on the west.

School House Built

"A school house was built in district No. 73, the year of its organization and when the inhabitants sought to name the new school house, some of them wished to call it 'Centre Valley' and other, 'Rolling Green,' but Centre Valley seemed the most popular name suggested, and so the new district started off happily under that name.

"The first officers of the district were C. W. Hamilton, George Miller, and Oliver Perrin, directors and M. L. Carter, clerk. C. W. Hamilton is getting along in the 80's and looks to be good for 25 years yet; George Miller is in his 77th year, Oliver Perrin has reached a ripe old age, while Carter is not many milestones behind. None of this group are men who would tackle a funeral proposition prematurely.

"In early times, the dance was a popular source of amusement and many wished to use the new school House for that purpose. As it afterward appeared, there were some objections. The date of the first dance was set and when the date and the dancers arrived. It was found that the new school house had been well seasoned with red pepper around and over the room. Sulphur in the stove and sacks in the pipe. The broom had been taken away so the dancers sprinkled snow over the floor and dragged a blanket, with two persons sitting on it, over the floor. Then they danced and sneezed to their heart's content. This incident settled all controversies as to the naming of the school house and henceforth, it was known as Red Pepper and in a few years "old" was added to the name.

No Tuition Required

"No tuition was ever required for pupils coming from elsewhere, to old Red Pepper and in the height of her prosperity, she had pupils from all the close surrounding districts.

"Not long after the school house was built, a literary society was organized that proved attractive to more or less people from all over the county. People came from Summerville, Cove, Union, Telocaset and sometimes from La Grande, and oftentimes when amateur plays were being staged the house would not hold the crowd. Then, those on the outside would carry the wood and make themselves platforms to stand on, and look in at the windoows.

"Red Pepper had what was known as a 'Neighborhood band' which usually consisted of an organ, violin, bass viol and cornet. They all played like the Irishman, 'by main strength.' Jet Gaskill, D. C. Cable and M. L. Carter did duty at different times as violinists, George Miller presided over the viol and W. D. Miller, the cornet.

M. L. Carter President

"M. L. Carter was elected the first president of the literary society, followed later by W. W. Randall and he was succeeded by George Miller. George was not much of a parliamentary rule shark, but he knew when people were behaving themselves. Then he was not the least bit backward in telling an unruly subject that there was disaster ahead if he didn't mend his ways.

"About 25 years ago, Red Pepper was hit by the spelling bee habit and many interesting contests were held. Any one that wished to spell was doubly welcome and an effort was made to get all the good spellers in the country to attend and take part. Red Pepper may have been a little slow in some ways but when it came to spelling, a challenge was out to any person or group of persons in the county, who thought they could spell.

"I. D. Smith, once considered the best teacher in the county, taught the school for many years in its palmy days, and he also took a leading part in the public activities of the neighborhood.

"The old time families grew up and drifted away. There are at present but few pupils to attend the public schools. The Red Pepper district and Hardscrabble in the Lower Cove consolidated a few years ago and the old school house is left to decay—a relic of by-gone years. While Red Pepper never experienced "the glory that was Greece, or the grandeur that was Rome," yet it filled an important niche in the lives of many country people and its literary entertainments attracted people from all parts of the valley regardless of bad weather, roads and slow modes of travelling. The weather had to be something fierce if the school house was not filled with people.

Writes Piece

"In early days, the school business in many districts was done in a rather loose manner and Red Pepper was not altogether an exception. At one time, we elected W. H. Madison, clerk, who insisted upon doing business strictly according to law. He also objected to using the school house for a dance hall. Mainly through his influence and insistence, dancing was stopped. We just had an awful time with that man, but in November, 1892, he conceded to go back to Kansas. Madison requested M. L. Carter to write a piece descriptive of the troubles he had caused in the neighborhood. This was delivered before the Red Pepper literary society on the eve of his departure."

Hurrah, boys, hurrah,
Deliverance is near,
And when our trouble vanishes
We'll never shed a tear;
Whene'er the cat forsakes the ranch
The rats and mice will play,
And we will have a good old time
When Madison goes away.

If we wished to do some business
Or the good, old-fashioned style,
In unadulterated form
Unmixed with law or guile,
Then Madison would interfere
And seek to pick a flaw;
And in a little off-hand speech
He'd tell us what was "law."

He says that contracts would be made
If he could have his way,
So when a teacher's work was done,
She could collect her pay.
He scolds because the desks are loose
And books are on the floor,
Because this stage is not torn up
And fired out at the door.

He growls because the boys will
Spit tobacco on the floor
And when they get one plug used up,
Because they buy some more—
He says if "gentlemen will act
Like ruminating brutes
They'll have to buy the school teacher
A pair of rubber boots."

'Ere long our troubles will be o'er
And Madison be gone,
But we have business giants left
To build our hopes upon;
And when he leaves this sunny clime
We wish it understood
He never must come back to harm
This peaceful neighborhood.

If it were not for the reason
That this monster is so tall,
And in this country round-about
The trees so very small;
We'd hang him to the highest limb,
That there was to be found
If it wasn't that his feet would be
A-trailing on the ground.

So, we'll fill these lamps brim full of "lic"
We'll chuck the seats out in a pile;
We'll dance all night with all our might,
While harps and fiddles play,
We'll just make Old Red Pepper howl,
When Madison goes away.

—M. L. Carter.

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