

HOME OF THE HORSE

Eastern Oregon Great Horse Country.

OLD TIME BREEDERS

Natural Advantages for Producing Fine Horses.

MORROW COUNTY WINNERS

After Years of Depression the Market is Looking Up, Which Has Awakened Interest in Horse Industry.

While a great deal has been said and written about Morrow county stock interests, the subject has been confined to sheep and cattle, because the wool and beef producers are now in the ascendancy, but it should not be forgotten that this portion of Eastern Oregon is one of the greatest horse countries on earth, from the standpoint of natural conditions that go to produce a good horse.

When Lewis and Clarke, with their brave party of explorers, floated down the Columbia river, almost a century ago, the hills of this country were covered with horses of the famous Cayuse breed, then owned by the Indians, and had been running here long before white men knew anything about this country.

The Cayuse, with his white eyes and spotted coat, has been the subject of many newspaper articles. A writer in a Portland paper recently traced the ancestry of these tough little horses away back to Arabian blood, coming from the pick and choice of such herds that no amount of money would tempt the Sultan of Turkey to part with today. Whether the owners of the celebrated Arabian horses, were induced to break the sacred charm, and part with the ancestors of the Cayuse or not, it makes but little difference, for no one knows where the Indian horse came from. No particular attention was paid to the breeding of the Cayuse by the Indians, and it was a question of the survival of the fittest, for the Indian horse grew in harmony with his environment.

Many fossil remains are now found, from The Dalles to the John Day valley, that great fossil bed which is now giving up the remains of pre-historic animals that existed prior to and during the lake period, of horses of different sizes and kinds, that roamed over the plains thousands of years ago.

The great endurance, stamina and good form of the Cayuse is not due to any particular stock, but to the perfect natural conditions under which these horses were reared.

Today, horses of all kinds and breeds, grown in this country, show greater endurance, lung power, better feet, and more perfect form, than in any country in the United States. This is a broad assertion, but it is true.

Take it in the far north in Alaska where there was a rigid test in the matter of endurance and stamina to stand hardships, the Eastern Oregon horse could stand twice as much as the British Columbia horses, or horses used there from other places.

In the South African war when England purchased thousands of horses, the Eastern Oregon horses stood the long sea voyage better and were more serviceable than any other horses.

The causes ascribed for the superiority of Eastern Oregon horses are, climatic conditions, altitude, and the nutritious native grasses upon which these horses are brought up.

In an early day in this country most of the stockmen were engaged in raising horses when wool was worth from 25 cents to 50 cents per pound and there was no end to range, but sheep were hard to get, and harder to take care of at such a great distance from market, and when herders were not looking for jobs

like they are today.

In those early days stockmen raised horses because it was an easy matter. The horses took care of themselves. It was not necessary to feed them in the winter for they pawed the snow from the bunch grass and came out in the spring fat and sleek. Years ago where there were thousands of horses, today there are none, for their places were taken with sheep and cattle simply because the sheep and cattle industry brought a bigger return of profit.

For years horses were what might be termed a drug on the market. Horses lived and grew old on the ranges and were never touched by the hand of man only when they were branded. At one time they were not worth a dollar a head, and it is no wonder that horse raisers became disgusted and quit the business, or were forced out of it.

Among one of the first horse breeders in this country was Taylor Green who resided near the present location of Weston. He commenced breeding horses about the year 1881. Another early breeder was D. A. Richards, whose claim took in the present townsite of Athena. Mr. Richards was one of the first men to introduce fine stock in this country.

Among the most prominent horsemen of Morrow county, and especially of early times are Matlock Brothers and Ben Swaggart.

In former times if the name Matlock was attached to a racing stable or to a horse entered in a race, there were knowing winks by the horsemen, for this meant that the horses were good ones. Matlocks kept no bad horses and their winners pulled down the purses all over the United States. The brothers were Caz, Ed, Thos. and Wm.

Thos. and Caz Matlock are still engaged in raising horses but not to such a large extent as in former times.

Old Alta, owned by Thos. Matlock, is still living, being about 23 years old. This was a once famous mare, having a mark of 2:22, and she went under the wire first in a long list of races.

Haslo, a colt from old Alta, is now owned by Frank Frazier of Pendleton, who formerly owned the great Chehalis, a celebrated pacer bred in Eastern Oregon. Haslo is a great pacer.

Matlock brothers commenced the breeding of fine horses in 1889, but were buying fast racers before this time. The

name of Old Repetta is still familiar, however this famous mare was not bred in Eastern Oregon. She came from Maryland and was purchased for \$1500 by Matlock Bros. from Thos. Frude in 1885. Repetta was a winner all over the Northwest, California and the East.

Leannington was another fast horse owned by Matlock brothers. This racer was bred by Jessie Moore on Butter creek. This horse was raced all over the United States and one season he only lost one race out of 17 starts.

Among other fast horses bred here might be mentioned Old Villard, Lady Duffy and Baby Ruth, and many others of less importance.

Of all the big horse breeders in Eastern Oregon in an early day, Ben Swaggart, who is well known among horsemen, is the only man who has stayed with the business on an extensive scale until the present time. Mr. Swaggart is a lover of the horse and through all the adverse conditions that were presented when the horse business was at its lowest ebb, he has labored, and today he is making money, for the horses are pretty well cleaned up by the brisk demand of the past few years.

Mr. Swaggart is one of the old timers having commenced breeding horses in '74. He is now the most extensive breeder in Eastern Oregon.

Some of Mr. Swaggart's horses that have earned reputations in former times, can be mentioned; Little Dick, Lady Opal, General Coney, Fanny, and others.

Five years ago, Mr. Swaggart decided to improve his stock by getting some of the best blood that money could buy. While in San Francisco, in 1897, he bought the great Calphurnus. This stallion was bred in South Wales, and comes from a great family of winners.

Some of the colts from this fine horse are already showing the superiority of their breeding. At the Oregon State fair at Salem, last year, Oregon George, sired by Calphurnus, won the 2 year old fillee stakes, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. There were 18 entries from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and British Columbia. George ran second at Seattle, where there was a field of horses entered from all over the northwest and California.

Mr. Swaggart's horse ranch is 10 miles north of Heppner and contains 4000 acres. He owns six Jacks and five stallions, and has 600 head of horses.

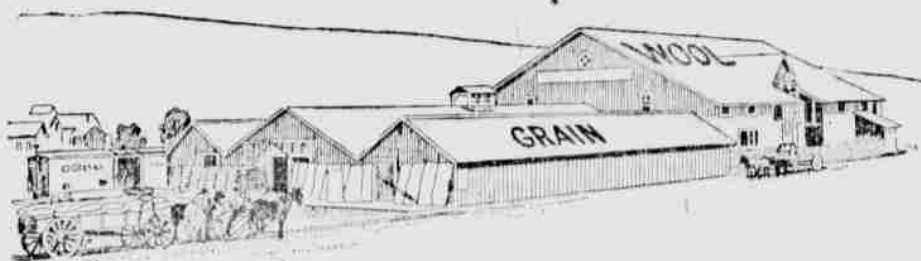
He is now devoting some attention to the raising of mules. He has 100 mares bred to Jacks at the present time. There is now a good demand for mules, being worth \$400 per span at the present time.

Morrow county is a favored spot in the great Inland Empire for horse raising.

O. E. Farnsworth, President

R. F. Hynd, Secretary

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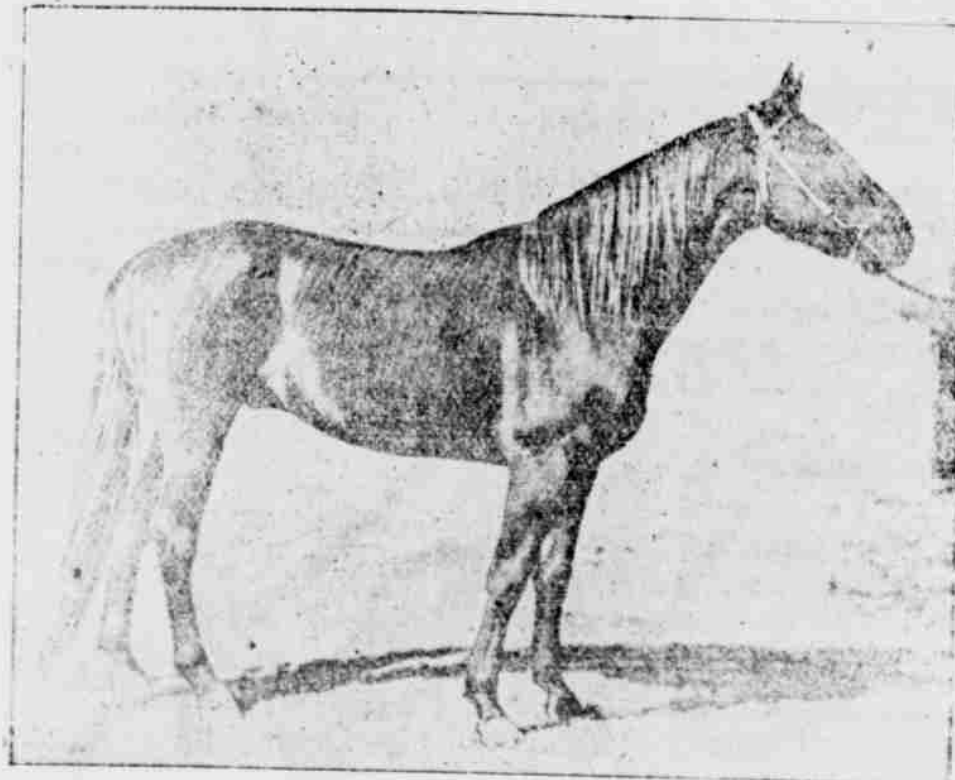
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ALTIMETER.



Altimeter by Altago, son of Altamont. Dam, Marilla by Oneco, son of Altamont. Second dam, Celilo, by Altamont. Owned by Geo. McKnight, of Butter Creek.