

THE WHEAT CENTER OF MORROW COUNTY DISTRICT OF LENA

Ione, the Second Town in Population and Volume of Business.

IS NOW ENJOYING RAPID GROWTH

Strong Competition in Buying Makes This One of the Best Grain Markets in Morrow County.

Few people realize the rapidity of the growth Ione is now enjoying. Most people know that carpenters and building materials were in heavy demand during the dry season, and that new houses are now springing up everywhere in the city and suburbs.

Ione, the second city in size in Morrow county, which has 2940 square miles area is beautifully located in the Willow Creek valley, with Willow creek sweeping by on one side and the O. R. & N. Co.'s railroad line on the other. About 12 years ago the place consisted of only one store and one or two dwellings. The city now has 500 inhabitants and is steadily growing. The place has 175 voters and about 190 children of school age. The mail reaches Ione twice daily; there is long distance and local telephone facilities, fire department, composed of a strong company and equipped with first class hand engine and hose cart.

Business and other establishments include three hotels, four general merchandise stores, two churches, one four room school building, five saloons, two hardware dealers, two blacksmith shops, one furniture store, one livery stable, two drug stores, one undertaking and cabinet house, one harness shop, one meat market, two barber shops, millinery store, two lumber yards, three warehouses, banking establishment, feed store, paint shop, wagon shop, real estate office, lawyer's office, one weekly paper, two city drays, three contractors and builders.

The Ione public school building was erected in 1897 and cost, including furniture, approximately \$4,250. The building is a two story frame and has four large rooms, and four lady teachers. The enrollment of pupils during the present year is 150.

The three warehouses at this place have handled in the neighborhood of 340,000 bushels of wheat this season, against 225,000 last year. Douglas handled about 175,000 as against 160,000; Lexington 170,000 as against 100,000; Jordan handled this year 112,000; Cecils, 30,000, and Heppner 50,000, making in all 877,000 bushels of wheat handled in Morrow county, of which Ione received nearly one-half.

Two of the warehouses at this point belong to two of the leading grain companies on the Pacific Coast. Balfour Guthrie & Co.'s building has a frontage of 320 feet and is 40 feet wide; the Kerr, Gifford building is 80 by 194 feet, and the Farmers' Warehouse, owned by several of the leading farmers of the county, has a floor space of 50 by 350 feet. Besides these grain companies there are several private buyers at this point, and the strong competition in grain buying along the Heppner branch makes this one of the best wheat markets on the Coast. The quality of the wheat raised on Morrow county soil is excellent, each sack averaging 134 pounds.

The banking establishment at Ione was instituted about 18 months ago by J. A. Woolery, who is prominently identified with the interests of the county and the upbuilding of Ione. Mr. Woolery opened his bank under many disadvantages. He at first fitted up one corner of his store building where he watched a small business grow into such proportions that to erect a building for this purpose was the only thing to do, and last August one of the best buildings there is more precipitation of moisture and a crop failure now is something

of the kind was completed and furnished at a cost of \$5000. The building is 24 by 42 feet and is beautifully finished in walnut and plastered. It is strictly up-to-date, and has two plate glass fronts, on Main and Spring streets. It has a 12 foot ceiling and an absolute fire proof vault makes it as safe as any institution of the kind to be found.

Among the other construction work in Ione during the past four months is the erection of large additions to C. T. Walker's store. The addition is plastered throughout and Mr. Walker has put in one of the largest stocks of merchandise ever brought to the city.

M. Halvorsen has erected a large addition to his store building, and 20 new rooms to the hotel building. Mr. Halvorsen has taken great precaution against the intrusion of live stock in his hotel and had the addition all plastered and fitted up with iron beds, etc. In fact Ione now has a first-class hotel under the efficient management of Frank Conklin, and the traveling men, who, by the way, besiege this place quite often, will say the same. Besides the above mentioned buildings, about 18 new dwellings have gone up in the past six months.

Ione has several fine residences, one of which is the finest in Morrow county. These buildings will be made doubly attractive when the city water system is inaugurated, so that lawns and shade trees can be cultivated.

The latest enterprise for Ione is the establishment of a real estate company, Elrood & Moore being the firm's name. They have erected a good sized office near the depot and will operate on a larger scale than ever in this country. In adjoining counties they have large interests, and during the past year have bought and sold over 150 quarter sections of land. Through their operations land has nearly doubled in value in the past year. Land that could be bought for \$2.50 and \$5 an acre a year ago is now selling at from \$5 to \$10, and is changing hands every day.

The officers and stockholders of a large mining company are residents of this place. Their mine, which is now undergoing some very promising development work, is located at Baker City, in the famous Virtus district. The fact that our people do not confine the attention to home interests alone proves that they are a prosperous, progressive class.

A Bright Future.

There are many promising things in store for Ione in the immediate future. First we might mention the incorporation of a company to change our bank to a First National Bank. This will probably be done early in the spring. Then there is talk of a large department at "Fair" store, also a lodging house and opera house being erected within the next few months.

The city is now revising its charter whereby the town may be bonded for city water works. When this is established, Ione being the best townsite in the county will be a perfect garden of Eden, when she is enabled to grow shade trees, lawns, etc.

The great wheat belt tributary to Ione is just beginning to assume proportions of industrial importance. The good pieces of government land which could be had a year ago are all taken by the homeseeker, and as more land is tilled, hardly possible. The thousands of acres of land known as "the sands", also tributary to Ione, will, when the new irrigation project is inaugurated, be the best hay and grain producing sections anywhere on the globe. In fact, it is our opinion that Ione will be made such a prominent shipping point as to upset all preconceived ideas of her possibilities.

V. A. D.

Strictly a Stock Growing Country

THE SHEEP IS KING

Hills are Dotted With Thousands of Hoofs.

Views of a Bright Writer

Butter Creek Country as It Appears to One Who Looks on the Bright Side of Life.

Localities worthy of a name, like men, have some significance in the world, and while it may be true that some are of more importance than others, yet it may also be true that by accident or incident, one may be brought more conspicuously to notice than another, while all alike fill a place in the commonwealth of a great country. This is strikingly true of the locality it is my fortune to represent. The traveler leaving Heppner in an easterly direction up Hinton creek, toward Pendleton, looking and longing for the great wheat fields of Umatilla county to break before him, is unconsciously passing a country of no less importance. This eastern portion of Morrow county is known by the precinct name of Lena. Long years ago, an early pioneer ran a store and postoffice where the road crosses Little Butter creek, and gave it the name the precinct now bears.

Season has succeeded season, the snows and flowers have had their inning, the grass has grown and withered many times upon his honored grave, but we doubt if the prophesy of all his worthy ambitions have been fulfilled, for nothing but some gaunt poplar trees remain of what once was Lena.

Heppner, fifteen miles distant, has absorbed all towns in this part of the country. All roads, both public and private, Roman like, leads to Heppner, and we keep them warm all times of the year. We will gladly welcome the advent of aerial locomotion, but don't want the automobile as with the "horse" we would have to work roads, climb hills, and dip in canyons.

The creeks, with many an incidental cascade and sylvan cataract, cut through the country in deep canyons, running in a northwest direction many miles, parallel with one another, while their hills on either side mount rock-rimmed and skyward.

From these alpine hill-tops the scenic surroundings are not surpassed if equaled in any other country on the globe. Looking northward is spread like a checkerboard the wheat fields of Umatilla; to the south and east, the gold fields of Baker and Grant; to the south, Heppner's coal mines are opening their vaults, while the sun sets in the grain fields of Sherman and Morrow.

But these unassuming hills at our feet rolled together as billow upon billow, with their grazing herds of cattle, horses and sheep, are among Morrows richest treasures. It was they who first gained the enviable significance she now enjoys, and are yet among the best although many and varied have since grown her resources.

The people live only on the creeks, the bottoms of which are narrow but exceedingly fertile, producing all the tenderer fruits and vegetables. Under irrigation these bottoms yield three heavy crops of alfalfa during the summer. In the winter this hay, with its bright green leaves and blue flowers, spread upon a background of beautiful white snow, produces a most delicate and pleasing effect on sheep. These evergreen meadows, skirted with timber, copse of cottonwood, cherry, willow, quakenasp and thorn, makes an ideal summer home for all the migratory birds. From these tropic-like groves, often dense with clinging vine, the oriole sings and the mocking-bird

whistles all the day long. The tinkling bells, bleating lambs and barking dogs; the cuckoo's call, and coyote's lonely howl upon the moonlit hills, are daily and nightly romances.

The country is sparsely settled, the lands have been collected from small into large holdings. Not less than 2000 sheep are run in a band, requiring 2000 acres of winter and spring range. The cost of running is one dollar per head a year, which is distributed among those employed in caring for them, so this land pays indirectly one dollar per acre annually to laboring classes. It must be borne in mind that this land is worthless for any but grazing purposes. A thrashing machine is never seen running in Lena precinct, and perhaps never will. All available land is tilled to hay for the support of stock, besides great quantities of grain are hauled in and fed.

It is safe to predict that these hills will never be reclaimed and given to diversified farming. No Dutchman will ever raise a large family upon 3 or 4 acres of cabbage on these hills. It would be as rational to talk about irrigating the moon.

But the sheep, chamois like, revel in a climb, treating with contempt their dizzy steeps, while every channel of commerce feels the tread of the golden hoof.

So this land will be occupied only by a pastoral people. Yet it is thought by some that we are nearing a state of transition, and these large flocks and land holdings will be subdivided into small ones again, which may be true. If this occurs, it will be from a scarcity of summer range in the mountains, and will not materially affect the flockmaster individually, but should be viewed as more of a public loss. Flocks will be reduced until these pastures will support them all the year. They will then be run inside of tight enclosures, so the herder will be relegated to the past, and with him will go most all outside labor.

With these changed conditions the profits of the flockmaster will be almost as large on one-half the number of sheep. The public may readily discern that it is their interest or part that is threatened, therefore should unite with us in a favorable solution of this vexed problem of the passing of the summer range.

It is safe to say that no industry pays the laboring classes so well, or affords the opportunities, and as a result hundreds of young men are attracted from the East and from beyond the sea, and once here never leave, but take easily to our ways, rough as they first appear, and are eventually assimilated into citizenship.

I believe that life under certain environments is calculated to mentally and spiritually elevate and broaden the dwellers therein. Who shall say that the daily contemplation of his broad acres and large flocks, which owe their productiveness to his energy and toil, does not give him breadth of view and purpose, or the perpetual vision of the majestic hills does not create and foster noble aspirations. At least it is coinci-

dent that the residents of this locality are broadminded and liberal. It is common to see a man of princely fortune "sopping" his biscuit in the same frying pan with a herder.

On election day, at Lena, when the outside world is divided into warring political factions, democrat and republican may be seen drinking from the same jug, or later in the afternoon, these knights of free trade and protection, free silver and gold standard, imperialism and expansion, weary of the weight of these mighty issues, democrat and republican, laid out and sleeping side by side, command the respect of a prohibitionist.

Kind and indulgent reader, the bells are ringing, it is time for us to part. If I have instructed or entertained you, I am happy.

Standing upon the rear platform of this passing, fleeting year, I invoke the divine blessings to rest with each and every one, through all the glad New Year.

GEORGE MCKNIGHT.

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