

Lemons

Continued from Page 1

excavating in 1974,” Kim said. L&L Excavating, is now managed by Kim with his son John Wesley. They also run Kim Lemons Livestock Transportation.

“That was how we kept the ranch going,” Kim said. “The cattle check sometimes didn’t support the ranch for the full year.”

Kim and Carla also have a daughter, Sara (Lemons) Wilson, married to Mitch Wilson, and they own a welding business in John Day. They have two children, son Rowdy and daughter Addison.

John has a son named Wyatt.

“All the kids and grandkids help immensely on the ranch,” Kim said.

Kim said he and his wife have worked side by side over the years.

“She’s been a wonderful ranch wife,” he said.

She and his mother, Margaret, who will be 95 in December, would feed cattle while he had construction jobs, and Carla would feed ranch crews, when some-



Contributed photo/Kim and Carla Lemons
John Wesley and Laura Lemons bought the old Grant County Fairgrounds property in Mt. Vernon, including the pavilion, when the fairgrounds relocated to John Day. John and Laura made the pavilion their home from 1900-1907 and raised their 11 children there.

times 10 guests would turn into 15, but “she’d make it work,” he said.

Although there have been tough and lean times, Kim said his experiences pale in comparison to hardships faced by his ancestors.

His great-grandparents

John Wesley and Laura raised 11 children, eight sons and three daughters, on the ranch.

The senior John Wesley moved to Grant County in 1875 at age 18, and married Laura in 1876.

They later bought the old

Grant County Fairgrounds property, adjacent to the ranch, from B.C. Trowbridge, when the fairgrounds relocated to John Day.

The large family moved into what was the fairgrounds pavilion and lived there from 1880-1901.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter
Margaret Lemons, mother of Kim Lemons, waves as she rides on the ranch with her three great-grandchildren, Rowdy and Addison Wilson and Wyatt Lemons.

An outline of the race track, where the storied horse named Mt. Vernon competed, can still be seen by airplane, Kim said.

John Wesley operated a threshing machine and the family ran a stone mill, powered by water from Butte Creek, to make flour that they sold to Grant County families. Kim’s grandfather Brice Lemons supplemented the ranching income by milking six or seven cows a day by hand.

Growing up on the ranch,

Kim said he and his sister Susan (Wilson) “did a lot of buckarooing” — moving cattle, feeding and more — and his other sister Sandra (Johnson) helped their mom cook big ranch meals. His brother Larry Lemons, who lived in Alaska, passed away last year. Kim said family members still help during branding time and feeding cattle on the weekends.

“It’s my turn to take care of it, until I can hand it down to the next generation,” Kim said.

Edigers

Continued from Page 1

John’s brother, that evening and spent their honeymoon at the Cant Ranch.

Hard times fell on the Massons when the wool market crashed, but with financial assistance received through mutual friends from Scotland, they avoided foreclosure.

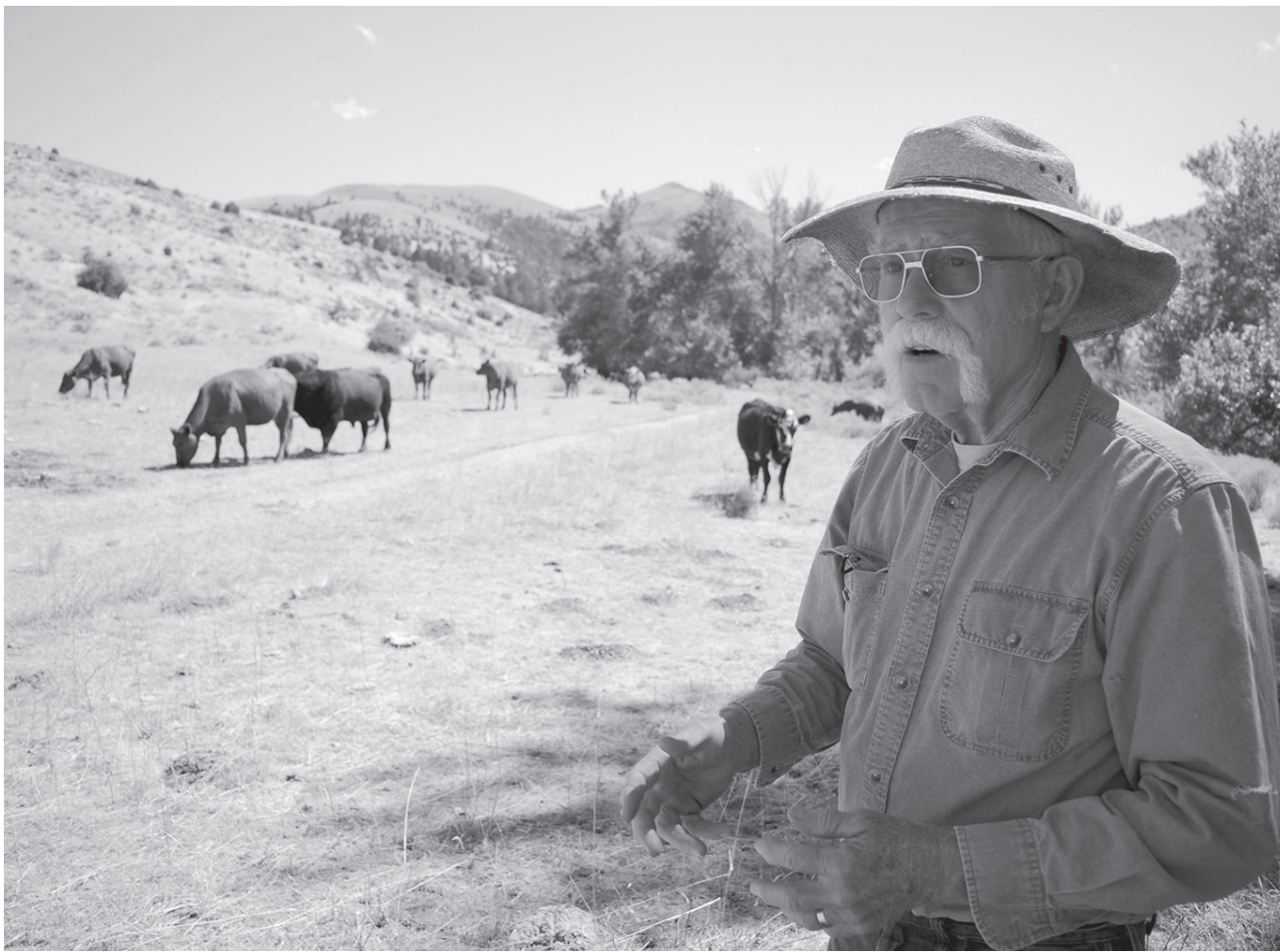
During that time, the Massons transitioned from raising sheep to Durham and Hereford cattle, and they grew alfalfa along with native meadow grass hay.

Roger said the operation they have today is pretty much the same with the work done at a higher degree of efficiency.

“We grow more crop alfalfa,” he said, and now they raise Sim-Angus, Red Angus and polled Hereford cross cattle.

The ranch is a 15-plus-year member of Country Natural Beef, a Family Ranch Co-op.

The Massons had three children, their oldest son John, who was nicknamed “Jack”; Katherine, Roger’s mother, born in 1914; and Victor Wilfred, who was nicknamed “Vic.”



Eagle file photo
Roger Ediger is shown on his Eastern Oregon ranch with McClellan Mountain in the background.

All the Masson children attended Mt. Vernon School.

Even riding horseback to school, “Mom had perfect attendance for 12 years in

school ... and she was valedictorian,” Roger said.

“My grandfather took me everywhere he could take me,” Roger said. “I followed

my Uncle Jack. I was always underfoot.”

Jack was the second generation to run the ranch, and Roger followed Jack’s lead.

years at Grant Union High School.

Meredith was a Grant County Circuit Court clerk for 17 years. They have two daughters, Orissa Lazano and Vernita Ediger, and one son, John Ediger.

Things have changed over the last century.

A gravity-flow sprinkler system is now used instead of flood irrigation, tractors replaced work horses in the ‘40s and four-wheelers have replaced riding horses.

Another advancement for the Edigers has been their inline bale wrapper.

“It’s another way of dealing with hay, instead of waiting for it dry,” Roger said. “I can mow today, bale it tomorrow and wrap it the next day and be done.”

One thing hasn’t changed, and that is their passion for the way of life.

“Most kids today that are born and raised on ranches can’t wait to get out of there, because they know there’s more sweat than money,” Roger said. “I think the people who are truly involved in small family ranches, we end up letting the ranch define who we are — this is who you are, this is what you do.”

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