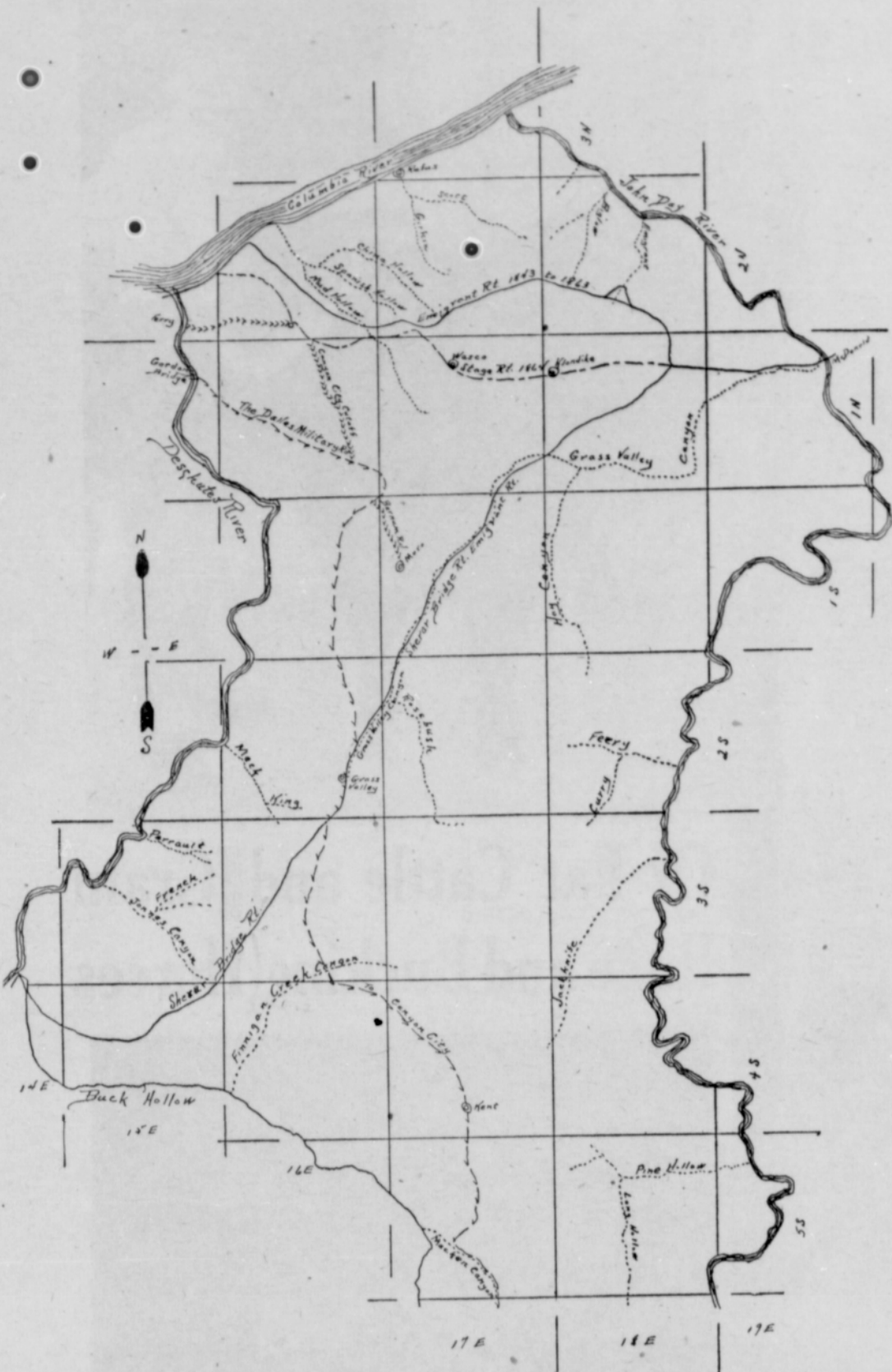


# The County; Its Fair Its Resources of Land and Reliant Citizens



It would seem a natural question that when one mentioned a county fair to ask, "What county?"

That would make a great deal of difference. A prosperous county, one whose citizens were producing agricultural wealth of sufficient quality and quantity to make its residents prosperous should be able to show better exhibits than one not so fortunate or foresighted.

That is one reason why Sherman county has a good fair; it has good products to exhibit.

And naturally, any discourse about the Sherman County Fair might well be preceded by some words about the county.

The map shows what it looks like on paper. It does not, and cannot show the depth of the John Day and Deschutes canyons, nor of Buck Hollow or the Columbia that set Sherman county geographically apart from the remainder of the state and make it an entity. Its citizens have more difficulty than most in associating with those of other counties because someone has to cross a river to visit or be visited.

There is 531,200 acres in Sherman county according to the U. S. census. Of this acreage 492,293 acres are in farms, a percentage higher by far than that of any other Oregon county. It means that over 92 percent of the county is privately owned, remarkable in a state that has 53 percent of its land in federal ownership.

Also there are 250,000 acres of tillable land in the county, nearly all farmed in the summer-fallow method which gives the county an annual crop of about 140,000 acres of wheat each year. This year it produced in excess of 30 bushels per acre—almost twice the national average—for a county income from wheat alone of more than \$9,000,000.

The state department of agriculture estimates that cattle and livestock produce a quarter of the annual income. There are some businesses and salaries and wages in addition to make the total income between \$11,000,000 and \$12,000,000, to restrain the tendency to boast inherent in the advertising writer. There are 2271 persons who claim Sherman county as home.

A highway runs the length of it and a highway crosses it along the Columbia. A secondary highway makes it possible to cross about the middle. County roads are well graveled. Towns are small. There were in 1948, 577 farms operated by 273 operators.

Farms are operated by tractors. The horse that used to toil six days a week now runs free except a few hours on Sunday. But it is a different horse. The 1600 pound Belgian and Percheron has been superseded by the excitable thoroughbred and the palomino, who inherited the buckskin's color but not the name.

So, you see, it's quite a county.

And well able to produce a good fair, with good exhibits, good horses, good cattle, good entertainment. You'd think it would be good, wouldn't you. It is.

Perhaps the feature that makes it different from other fairs around the country is its horse races. Whereas other fairs go in for rodeo events almost exclusively Sherman county adheres to its early interest and given major prominence to horse racing.

Not that there isn't a rodeo. Mac Barbour brings his livestock, his buckers and riders, and puts on the show, just as he puts on shows all over the west. And they are good.

But in Sherman county the farmers have always liked race horses. And they run them at the fair. And at other fairs, too. Some go to Portland and Santa Anita and Salem. The track is good, the barns ample, the interest high.

So there's horse races. Not races run in between other events, in which an unannounced group of mixed riders come onto the track, start without ceremony or equity, and run with effort but no training. These are horse races. Good ones, between well matched horses, well trained horses, brought on to the track with order and on time, started (probably with gates) carefully.



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But the excuse for holding a fair is to show off the exhibits. It is the prize pumpkin idea, old and trite as it is, that makes a fair. Sherman county doesn't go in much for pumpkins although there will be some nice, smooth ones on display, grown by some

one who wants to know what's in their Thanksgiving pie. We go in for fat steers. The best ones are shown by 4-H club children. Probably they're not perfect but they are close enough to perfection to win grand championships at the PI and state fair a good part of the



time. Sometimes the steers are black, some come with white faces and red hair and some are vari-ous colors, but they are all fat, all well bred, all handled by very tentative boys and girls. So that makes the boys and girls a sort of display as well. And fortunate is the county that

can give its youngsters an opportunity to produce something, show it in competition, learn to win and learn to lose, go as far as their abilities, their ambitions, their knowledge will take them. The calves, pretty as they are, are incidental to the greater plan of educating boys and girls.

