

Horses Were of Great Importance to Sherman Countians Until a Generation Ago; Horses Did the Work, Took Residents to Picnics and to Courting; Gas Wins Over Hay

Sherman county was settled by men with horses—and a few oxen. For thirty years it was farmed with horse power. Even then there was constant improvement in the machinery used.

Much of the sod was turned by walking plows and then came the Stockton gangs of which only a few examples remain. It was a wooden beam plow with an iron standard on which was bolted a reversible share. Soon inventive homesteaders fastened two walking plows together and put wheels on them and manufacturers got the idea and invented the light running Casady, the Flying Dutchman, gradually heavier and stronger until the big tractor plows of today.

First harrows were of wood, first seeding was by broadcast, there were no weeder—no weeds.

It is not always remembered but transportation was by horse as well as the farming. If a man wanted to go from here to there he rode a horse, a wagon or, if without either, he walked. There was a lot of walking done.

A large part of the homesteaders in Sherman county had to



This picture was taken at Eight Mile as Roy French was on his way in from picking up a load of wool in the interior. Time was in 1892. Gray Frank was the line leader, Johnnie the off wheeler. Nig and Mike the pointers, Pet the saddle wheeler and George the off wheeler. This is one of the older pictures of authentic scenes of early day labors.

earn money some way other than by farming so they hauled wool for sheep men of the central plateau to Moody's warehouse at The Dalles. A trip took several weeks all of which was spent camping out in spring weather. A freighter had to be tough—and he generally felt that way.

Thrashing was first done by tramping out the grain on a canvas and winnowing it in the wind. Before the main stream of settlers came a little seed wheat had been threshed by a horsepower machine Fulton brought over from Wasco county. Headers were introduced almost as soon as wheat was grown and steam threshers about the same time. They were not very efficient, not very big, but they worked. Combines were introduced in the late 1890s by a few venturesome farmers and eventually they replaced the stationary machines although it was a twenty year job.

The big change was the introduction of power machinery to replace the thousands of horses that toiled at plow and combine, the hundreds of men who drove

them and made gasoline the fuel instead of hay.

First Tractors Didn't Work

A few steam tractors were tried with little success. First gas outfits were found wheeled and inefficient. By 1910 the tracklaying engine was invented and a sample brought to Sherman county. It was big and awkward, and expensive but it didn't have to be curried nor fed when not working. It would plow day and night. In twenty years the horse teams were almost gone, the teamsters relegated to odd jobs or reminiscence; garages stood where livery stables had been; the conversation was about spark plugs, pistons, transmissions instead of hames, sore shoulders, runaways.

The advent of the successful tractor made a change in all farm machinery. It had been made light so it would pull easier. With plenty of power it became heavier, stronger. Better tillage was possible.

Self propelled combines were introduced, discarded, re-introduced and are now in general use.



The men who manned the Jackson forks of the old threshing machines are no longer young—or even middle aged, so far back is that day. Sack sewing went out in the twenties with high prices for sacks and a sudden turning to bulk grain elevators. Pneumatic tires on trucks helped.

It was not so long ago—for an old-timer, that is,—when wheat was hauled with teams. Here is a picture of two eight mule teams

at DeMoss, driven with lines instead of jerk line. Mules were never common being of a disposition unappealing to most farmers.

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