



E. G. Noble's Harness and Saddlery at Heppner

## INDUSTRIES and INDIVIDUALS

Men and Businesses With Whom Prosperity and Success are Associated in This County.

By E. G. H.

"We are strong," says Emerson, "only as we ally ourselves with Nature." Another man by the name of Alfred Russel Wallace said that civilization had its rise in the domestication of animals; that where men domesticated the horse, the ox, the camel, the elephant; civilization thrived and man evolved; but in the countries where man had nothing in the way of domesticated animals, except the tame wolf, that is, the dog, there was no evolution.

There was once a fabled horse called Bucephalus. The peculiar thing about this horse was that no one could ride it. One day a young man by the name of Alexander, whose name, slightly tarnished still occupies a place in school histories, brought out a curious leather device and when this was strapped to the back of Bucephalus, he turned the trick.

This was the rude beginning of the modern saddle. It would be in-

teresting to have one of these early saddles and compare it with the fine hand-made article turned out by E. G. Noble, saddle maker superb.

The business now owned by E. G. Noble started about thirty years ago in 1886 to be exact. His father's name headed the firm known as the Noble, Horner & Herrington Harness Company. The firm had a long name, they put in long hours and had great hopes; but they were short on room and shorter on cash. We are told that they burned the midnight oil to keep the balance on the proper side of the page. Harness was dear but they never sacrificed quality for the sake of profits and men came one hundred and fifty miles from the interior to buy their harness of them. Heppner Harness was a byword for long service and honest goods.

There was also employed about the place a small, light haired boy. His work was to polish the floors and sprinkle the dust. In a few years the firm changed. Kirk & Hayes was written on the sign above the door. Then the Hayes Brothers got control. In all of the deals the boy went along as a matter of course, like the light fixtures, with the exception that he now greased the harness, drove rivets and other odd jobs that any boy can learn if he will keep his eyes open and not sit behind the scrap box reading about Old King Brady.

In the year 1894, just after the panic, E. G. Noble and Will Gentry pur-

chased the business. Two years later the elder Noble got into the "harness" again and the firm name was known as Noble & Son. The years rolled by, as the years will, and L. C. Campbell bought an interest in the business. Seven years ago E. G. Noble took over the part owned by Mr. Campbell and to this day has been the sole proprietor.

A general harness trade made up the business of the first firm. All of the work was done by hand. It was not uncommon to tan a little leather in the slack season. Business was good and prices were high. The hardest work was sewing the traces. "The first job that I was given to do," said Mr. Noble, "was to sew the leather on the ends of pack cinchas. The wax stuck to my fingers for six months." That the work was well done, can be ascertained by asking some of the men who bought these articles twenty-five years ago and who are still using them today.

About twenty-five years ago Mr. Noble first got the idea that saddles were made to sell and for no other particular reason. To fit the horse's back and insure comfort to the rider was never dreamed of. Saddles were made much in the way that they were in the days when Bucephalus lived and had his being. To make good saddles was the desire of M. R. Noble. He designed saddle trees that agreed with the spinal system of the horse. That these are practically and sci-

entifically correct is demonstrated in the fact that nearly every saddle maker in the country has adopted his designs, as near as the patent laws allow. Many a cow puncher has breathed a silent prayer for E. G. Noble as he folded his hands on the saddle horn after a long day's ride.

These saddle trees are made by hand, and by two Germans over in Walla Walla that are so far behind the times that they don't know enough to use cheap leather and wood. The leather that goes to finish the trees is cut, shaped and ornamented right in the shop where you can see it done. To do this work, they tell me, requires a man of more than ordinary ability. Men who make good doctors, hotel keepers, or editors, would starve to death finishing leather for saddles. Mr. Noble and Mr. B. P. Stone are finishers, they are also finished workmen. There is temperment in leather. Art after all is only the beautiful way of doing our work and I suggest to you who have never seen beautiful tooled leather work done, visit the shop of E. G. Noble in Heppner, Oregon.

I was at the depot a few days ago waiting for the "Unlimited" to arrive when I saw the express man unload three saddles. One went to British Columbia, one to Texas, and the other to New Mexico. Some time ago, Mr. Noble informed me, he sent three saddles to England. They are sold by catalog, except when some man writes in and tells Mr. Noble that he doesn't know anything about a saddle and to just ship him along one that he knows will serve him well. Needless to say, he generally gets a better saddle than those who insist that the leather be a dull brown and the cinchas be braided of forty hair strands. The first catalog was a small booklet issued about eight years ago. Three larger and better books have been printed since that time the last one being a gem of the printer's art. Yes, Samantha. The Herald printed it. Noble saddles are the last word in saddle sense. Whenever saddles are up for discussion Noble's name is often mentioned.

Be it also known that the Noble shop is well equipped with machinery which adds years to the harness man's life and makes the harness shop a place of delight. A National saddle machine, which costs \$150, does the hand work of sewing. Another and larger machine, costing \$250, does all kinds of harness sewing. It does it faster and better than any man can do by hand. A small Spotting machine puts ornaments on the leather. I saw one harness that had twelve hundred of these "spots" which are easily and quickly set by this machine. A Chinaman working for \$5 a day would have to put in extra time to keep himself in rice, so I am told. If he had to compete with this machine. Another machine is used for sewing carriage tops, awnings, and quilted seat saddles. There are several splitting, creasing, and embossing machines that are used in making belts, hat bands, and other small articles.

In the last three weeks Mr. Noble has sold over twenty sets of harness. Figure along with this a few whips, an extra riding bridle or so, a few pads, and a pair or two of those \$25 chaps. I almost forgot to mention a little repairing which Mr. Noble has done when not occupied with his regular harness work. Repairing is cash all over the United States and in some parts of eastern Kansas.

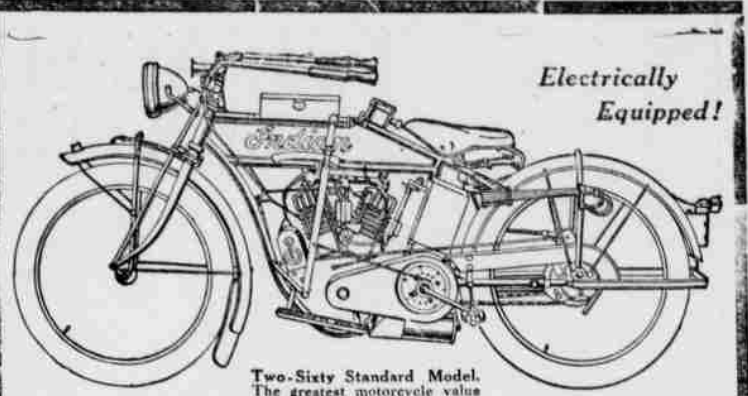
Mr. Noble has the largest harness business in Morrow, Grant, Sherman, Wheeler or Gilliam counties. Nearly everyone in Morrow county has either left a part of his ready cash or his name on the books with Mr. Noble. Noble's Horse Millinery, as he is wont to call it, represents the best efforts of men working with head, heart and hand. It is made after the thought that the things that must be used must be made well. They are not gaudy, they don't get on your nerves. There is no haggle, hankering, or hyperbole in Noble's way of doing business. Everything is marked in plain figures, take it or leave it. You can fool all of the people a part of the time but you will experience difficulty in fooling them all of the time therefore, I say, "Don't envy a man who has good harness, go to Noble and get a set." Step away from that horse's head, young man!

Don't forget to shut off irrigation water when the whistle blows. Parties who continue to violate this rule will be deprived of their water service.

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## J. B. SPARKS

HEPPNER, OREGON

Agent for Morrow County.