

Sheep Raising Introduced Into Section About 1870

THERE is doubt as to just who first introduced sheep raising into Morrow county, as evidence the research of W. S. Shiach, who in 1902 published a history of Morrow county. That part of Mr. Shiach's story treating with the development of the county at the time sheep raising was introduced, is quoted as follows:

The greater portion of the territory out of which Morrow county was formed was, prior to February 16, 1885, a part of Umatilla county. Its political history before that date has heretofore been sufficiently treated in previous pages, but it is incumbent that we inquire somewhat more particularly into the early settlement and development of this particular section. The old emigrant road, the highway over which the great westward moving army of civilization wended its way to the Willamette valley and the coast, passes through the northern part of Morrow county. It is, therefore, probable that the first white men aside from fur traders and explorers to look upon this section viewed its bunchgrass hills while journeying resolutely toward the setting sun. But as is at present the case with the railroads, this primitive highway of civilization passed through the poorest part of Morrow county, and the early pioneers doubtless considered it as worthless, except for the luxuriant bunchgrass which covered each hill from base to crest and spread out profusely over the valleys.

When, however, a couple of decades later the Willamette country began to be well stocked with herds of cattle and sheep, many remembered the rich pastures on the eastern slope of the Cascades, and beyond, and as early as 1862, or perhaps even before that, it became customary to drive cattle over into the valleys of Morrow county and leave them there to shift for themselves, the owners returning shortly to their homes farther west. Mr. T. H. Bisbee, who passed through Morrow county in the spring of 1862, en route to the Salmon river mines, says that there was a man in one of the parties named Parker who claimed to have a number of cattle on Butter creek and stated that the party to which Mr. Bisbee belonged were at liberty to kill one of these animals for the replenishment of their larder. Mr. Bisbee seems doubtful at the present as to the truthfulness of Parker's representations, but no doubt seemed to exist in the minds of his party at that time. At any rate there certainly were cattle in the valley in the spring of 1862, for a bovine was seen shortly after the expedition reached the Butter creek country. It was executed with more dispatch than ceremony. Mr. Bisbee also states that there was a man whose name he does not remember, living at Wells Springs at the time of his trip.

A. S. Wells, who came into the country on a freighting expedition in the spring of 1864, says that the population, as he remembers it, consisted at that time of John Jordan, who lived on the forks of Rhea and Willow creeks, T. W. Ayers and William Ayers on Butter creek, A. J. Breeden on Willow creek about seven miles below the site of the present Heppner, Oscar Clark at the mouth of Clark's canyon just below and on the opposite side of the creek from the present town of Lexington, and William Cecil at the point where Willow creek is crossed by the old emigrant road. All these men had settled in the county since Mr. Wells made his first trip in 1858.

The population during the next

few years did not exceed a dozen families, but the years 1868-9-70 saw a very considerable immigration of cattlemen. These settled along the creek bottoms, where an abundance of rye grass could be secured for winter feed. Their cattle were allowed to roam at will during almost all seasons over the bunchgrass hills, which afforded an abundance of pasture. Ellsworth states that the first cattle camp of the county was located on Birch creek to which a herd of cattle was brought some years prior to 1870 by a Texan named Menafee. At a very early date also G. W. Shippey brought in two hundred head of Durham cattle and established himself on Willow creek. Dol. Reed soon after came with horses and cattle and James Robinson with four hundred steers. 'Cattle camps,' says Ellsworth, 'were also located up Little Butter creek, Big Butter creek, Kind Fork creek, Main Kind Fork creek and on Rhea creek.'

Just who was the first to import sheep into Morrow county also seems rather difficult to determine with certainty. Ellsworth says: 'As near as can be ascertained, the first sheep were brought into this county about 1870 by Messrs. P. C. Thompson and Boone Mulkey, who were in partnership and established their sheep camp in what was known as Thompson canyon, just east of the present city of Heppner. About this time John Davis also came in with a band of sheep, locating on Main creek about three miles below this city (Heppner).' Mr. Ellsworth was misinformed as to the date of arrival of these men, who certainly did not come here until some three years later. The writer has interrogated several different pioneers as to who it was that introduced the sheep-raising industry, and has received the same answer from no two of them. The facts probably are that a number of sheepmen invaded the territory at the same time. Mr. Ellis Minor relates that early in the seventies Joseph Crook brought a band of sheep into the Eight Mile country. Shortly afterward a number of them showed symptoms of having been poisoned and

Chairman of the Entertainment Committee



a few died. An idea gained currency that the sheep had been poisoned by cattlemen, who are always avowed enemies of the wool-growing industry, but the truth probably was that they suffered and died from eating a poisonous plant or partaking of a poisonous mineral. Sheepmen have sustained loss in this way at various times since. No doubt cattlemen were perfectly willing that any story should be believed which would have a discouraging influence upon the importation of sheep, the consequence of which would be to spoil their range. The effect of Mr. Crook's misfortune was to discourage wool growing in this part of Umatilla county but the industry eventually gained a foothold and rapidly grew in importance and extent, soon becoming a greater source of wealth production than cattle raising. Milton Hale, K. Lemons, Joseph Crook and William Penland were among those who introduced the wool-growing industry into the county. Penland is said to have brought a few sheep with him when he came to the county in 1868."

—§—
You're sent to jail if you're proved a thief,
But what the heck about drouth relief?

—§—
No telling what thousands to Geary were sent,
But up went the freight rates 10 per cent.

—§—
There are no new Smiths in Corvallis. Muddy roads will not permit bicycling.

—§—
For sale—One pair pink pajamas. P. M. Brandt.

—§—
Charlie Burgess has chartered a whole hotel.

How Organization Has Helped Wool Industry

By WALTER HOLT,
Secretary Oregon Wool Growers

INCREASED income arising from the work of the National Wool Growers association reaches individual sheep owners through higher prices resulting from protective tariffs on wool and lambs. Diminished expenses are brought about through savings in freight rates, stockyard and commission charges, rates of interest on loans, and on many other items of smaller importance. The National association's income is provided solely by payments from the various state organizations. In addition to their contributions to the above line of work, the state associations effect many economies for their members in connection with rates of taxation, local freight rates and other charges connected with shipping, and rental rates on state and privately owned lands.

GRAZING FEES CUT IN HALF

The new grazing charges which went into effect in 1933 were in a large measure brought about through the persistent efforts of the organized stockmen. Speaking in average terms with relation to Forest permits, these charges within the new schedule amounted to 2.05c per head per month. In 1931 the charge was 4.5c. This is slightly greater than a 50 per cent reduction in the actual cash outlay for grazing charges among wool growers using the National Forest, and means a tremendous saving when the total is calculated. From the standpoint of the individual, the saving alone for each month would just about pay the state and national association membership fee for two years, the basis of that membership for Oregon wool growers being 1 1/2c per head of sheep during the last several years. This new grazing arrangement, it should be remembered, is based upon a sliding scale which provides charges based upon the market value of the livestock being grazed in the forest. In other words, the ability to pay has become the basis for grazing costs rather than a flat fee which, had it not been for the organized wool growers, would

doubtless have been 10c or 12c per head per month.

In 1933 the savings to the owners of sheep which grazed in the forests of the 11 western states amounted to \$484,640.34, or enough to keep the national association on a working basis for many, many years.

ASSOCIATION BENEFITS NON-MEMBERS

Those who have fought the wool growers' battles in trying to provide fair transportation charges know that were it not for these organized efforts, railroad rates would be almost unbearable. The Oregon Wool Growers association has joined its force with the other states to assist the National association in rate fights which have meant savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars to sheep shippers. The unpleasant thing about all this is the fact that the wool grower who takes no interest in his state or national associations, who contributes no support to the solution of his major problems, is reaping a very large measure of benefit from the expenditures of time and money by his neighbors.

It is needless to say that the dues-paying wool growers deserve entire credit for the present protective tariff now in effect with relation to wools imported into this country. A price of 34c a pound for scoured wools should be recognized as a formidable barrier against outside wool, which if allowed to enter the country, would without question seriously affect the complexion of the present-day wool prices.

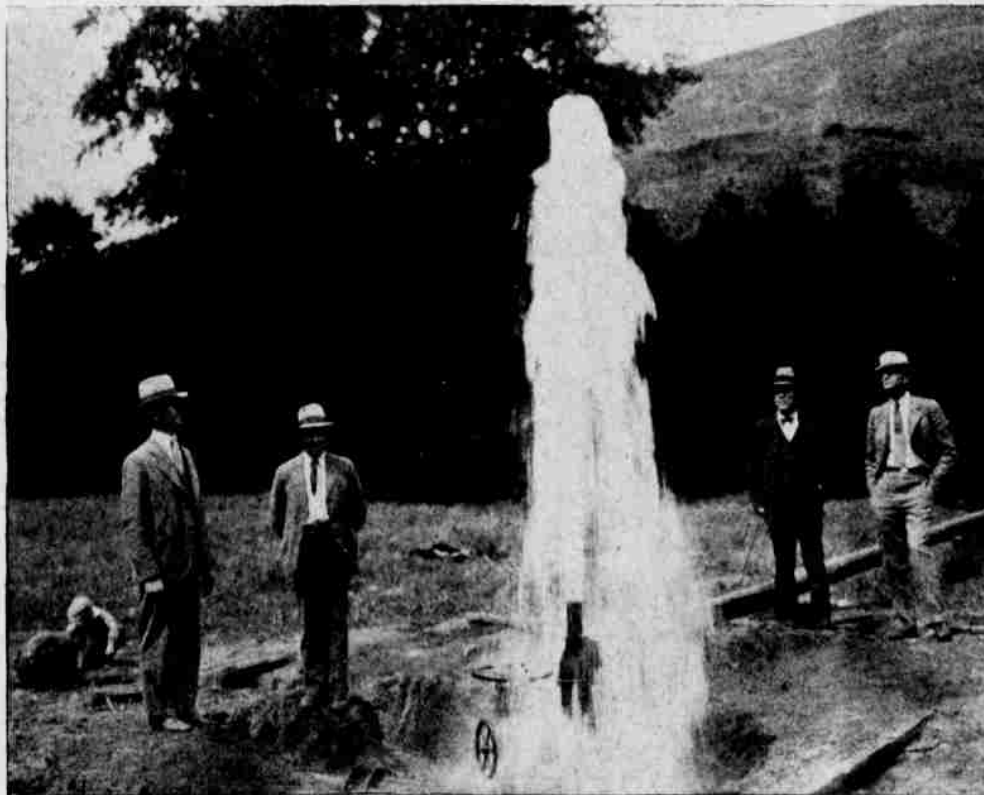
HELPS IN MANY WAYS

There are numerous fields of endeavor in which the Oregon Wool Growers association cooperates with the National in making the lot of the wool grower tolerable. The day to day campaign for the increased consumption of lamb and wool is given little recognition by the rank and file of wool growers, but nevertheless is a potent factor in maintaining prices at such levels as have prevailed in recent years in spite of the extreme adversity which has surrounded all business endeavor. Predatory animals would be exacting a toll of unbelievable proportions if the organized wool growers were not incessantly alert to the need for continually carrying this important problem to the appropriating bodies of the state and nation.

Then there are such questions as driveways, water development, disease control, and many other items which are continually before the wool growers of the country and which are receiving all possible consideration by the officers and membership of the various wool growers associations. With improved financial conditions confronting the industry, it is hoped that a greatly increased number of Oregon sheepmen will come to realize that out of fairness and justice, not only to their neighbors, but to themselves, they should be making the relatively insignificant contribution which is necessary to place them in good standing before the organized wool growers of the community and state. It is hoped that this may be the case, and that during 1935 many of the sheepmen who have not before been counted among the membership in the Oregon Wool Growers association will so arrange their affairs as to become a part of that very useful organization which has been fighting the wool growers' battles for 38 years in Oregon.

—§—
For sale, or will give to any kind sheepman—Boston bull. R. A. Ward.

The Source of Heppner's Water



The above picture was taken shortly after the city's first artesian well was brought in on April 22, 1931 at the forks of Willow Creek, 12 miles southeast of town. The estimated flow at that time was 700,000 gallons every twenty-four hours. From left to right, the men viewing the gusher are the then-councilmen, Gay M. Anderson, W. Claude Cox, Jeff Jones and C. L. Sweek. The city has since drilled a second artesian well, which with the first, now supplies Heppner with fine, pure water.