

# Heppner Gazette Times

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## Soil Loss Heavy In Friday Flood

### Water Peak Highest Since 1943 Cloudburst



**FLOOD AT ITS PEAK** — Last Friday evening's flash flood was caught at its height by C. A. Ruggles as water was lapping at buildings in the extreme west end of town. This photo was taken from the Birch street bridge across Willow creek looking upstream. Little damage was done in town though youngsters had a field day after the water went down catching fish that had been stranded in puddles in fields. Thousands of fish were killed.



**MUDDY DELUGE** roars under the Alfalfa street bridge at the east city limits of Heppner. Before starting to recede the water raised at least another foot to put it well up on the bridge stringers which here were still above the surface. All city bridges and sewer line crossings withstood the water but water department crews had many anxious moments before the water started to drop.—(GT Photo)



**RISING FAST** — Heppner police chief Dean Gilman watches the rising water from the Alfalfa street bridge. Water was not at peak when this picture was taken and some of the clumps of willow trees in the center background were uprooted and washed downstream.—(GT Photo)



**HEAVY DAMAGE TO FIELDS** along Balm fork is shown in this photograph taken Saturday morning of one of the Osmin fields. Water still stands in holes gouged as much as four feet deep in this recently leveled land. Section of field closest to camera was above water, but in many places in vicinity water covered entire fields and the road. Crops in all fields reached by the water were completely obliterated. Some alfalfa fields along Balm fork looked as though they had been sliced with a knife — the upper part green with alfalfa, the lower scrubbed clear down to rock and gravel. The worst of the "spout" hit a mile or two upstream from this field.—(GT Photo)

## Schools Slate Graduation Programs

All schools in this immediate area this week announced plans for commencement exercises to be held for graduating seniors and eighth graders who will step up into high school at the beginning of the next school year.

Heppner high school will graduate 29 students at commencement exercises slated for 8 p.m. Wednesday, May 22 at the gymnasium. Graduation speaker will be Francis Nickerson, executive secretary, state committee on high school-college relations for the state board of higher education. Nickerson is the son of Mrs. Grace Nickerson and is a former graduate of Heppner high school. He has attended Oregon State College and graduated from the eighth grade class. Dr. Frank Bennett,

advanced work at Northwestern University and the U of O.

Heppner eighth grade graduation exercises will be held Thursday evening, May 23 in the gym. There will also hold its exercises Wednesday evening in the school cafeteria when 12 seniors will receive their diplomas and awards. Guest speaker will be Dr. Elwayne Lieuallen, president of Oregon State College of Education at Monmouth. The program will also include eighth grade graduation.

The Lexington commencement program is set for Thursday evening May 23 in the school auditorium. It will be a combination program for both the seven high school seniors and the eighth grade class. Dr. Frank Bennett,

president of Eastern Oregon College of Education at La Grande will be the speaker.

All other county schools will hold exercises sometime during the week, but exact dates were not available.

**AIR BASE OPEN HOUSE DATE CORRECTED**

A story in last week's Gazette Times carried the incorrect date for the open house to be held at the Condon Air Base in observance of Armed Forces Day. The time is Saturday, May 18 from 1 to 5 p.m.

**Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Ruggles** were in Pasco on Saturday to attend the Shrine ceremony there.

A flash flood reminiscent of others in past years, descended on Heppner from Balm Fork just before dusk last Friday evening causing much excitement in town, but only minor damage.

Not so lucky were the farm lands along the creek canyon where the cloudburst struck, for the equivalent of a good sized farm washed down Balm and Willow creeks with the flood of water which measured nearly eight feet in depth at its peak.

Many persons had kept a weather eye peeled at the heavy black clouds which lay over the hills to the south and east of Heppner most of the afternoon, but it was 6:20 p.m. before the first word of trouble came from Mrs. A. L. Osmin, who lives about four miles up Balm Fork from Heppner. She called Heppner fire chief C. A. Ruggles, who with assistant chief Robert Penland and

police chief Dean Gilman, sheriff C. J. D. Bauman and state patrolman William Labhart drove up the stream about two miles to check the progress of the flood. One crest had already reached the first bridge above town, which was not of sufficient height to cause trouble, but as the men watched the second wave came down the canyon and the group rushed back to town to sound a warning.

Using the city siren and fire trucks, persons living along the banks of Willow creek were warned of the water in ample time to be prepared to move out if necessary. The precaution proved unnecessary, though the crest of the flood was reported to be higher than any since the flash flood of 1943, and the waters overflowed stream banks in many places and surrounded small buildings in the lower end of town.

**Bridges Not Damaged**

City crews and firemen kept watch on bridges throughout the length of Heppner and at times fear was felt that some of them, and adjacent sewer crossings might be damaged as logs, debris and clumps of willow trees rolled along with the head of chocolate-colored water. None suffered any damage though several bridges had only inches of clearance above the stream at its peak.

Hundreds of persons gathered to watch the flood roll through town . . . the older, more seasoned residents of Heppner from a safe distance, the younger from bridges and close range not being as well aware of the potential danger of a "waterspout" as were those persons who have seen them before.

**Field Damage Heavy**

The downpour or "spout" centered in an area about four or five miles in length along Balm Fork, the western side of the storm being located about three miles southeast of Heppner. Balm Fork carried the bulk of the water, though some damage was reported from Sanford Canyon which empties into Rhea creek above Ruggs.

Some of the Osmin ranches fields along the creek bottom suffered the heaviest damage from the flood with several, which had recently been leveled, being obliterated. Some of the

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### Joann Brosnan Wins UN Trip

A reconsideration of the judging in the district United Nations Pilgrimage contest held March 30 at Pendleton resulted in the Heppner winner, Miss Joann Brosnan being chosen as co-winner. As a result she will leave here July 11 for the New York trip.

Miss Brosnan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Brosnan, placed first in the local contest and competed against 16 other students in the finals. Originally an Inskip boy from Irrigon high school was named winner by the judges who took nearly two hours to make the decision, but later they advised the I.O.O.F. youth committee that they felt both Inskip and Miss Brosnan were entitled to the trip. She was advised of the change early this week.

Joann is the third winner of UN contests from Heppner high school in the six years that it has been held. She will leave here July 11 for Portland where she will join other Oregon winners. The following day the northwest group will leave Spokane by charter bus. She will return home August 8 after two cross-country trips and a week in New York.

**Students Win VFW Poppy Contest**

The VFW auxiliary of Lexington held a poppy contest with students from the Lexington and Heppner schools participating.

William James Steagall of Lexington won first prize and Judy Schmidt and Libby Van Schoelack of Heppner tied for second place. The judges were Mrs. Al Bunch, Heppner; Mrs. Don Hatfield, Lexington and Mrs. Norman Nelson, Ione.



**BURTON PECK**, left, Lexington rancher, this week was named Morrow county "Conservation Man of the Year." Mr. Peck is shown with his wife and son, James, who assists him on his farm. See story adjoining.—(Wilson Photo)

## Burton Peck, Lexington Rancher, Selected as Conservation Man

A homesteader in Morrow county over 50 years ago, Burton Peck, Lexington, has been named the county winner of the "Soil Conservation Man of the Year" award for 1957, a selection committee has announced.

Conservation practices on Peck's 640 acre wheat ranch south of Lexington, which he acquired in 1925, include 608 acres of strip cropping recently established, 40 acres of crested wheat grass, Ladak alfalfa and bulbosa and two acres seeded this spring of pubescent wheatgrass and fescue grass.

Peck utilizes all his stubble, occasionally subsoils in the fall to catch winter moisture and has

filled several gullies to make tillage possible. One of the six county wheat fertilizer trial plots of the extension service is located



**MAT HALVORSEN**, Morrow county pioneer rancher who died Saturday at the age of 90 years.

### Mat Halvorsen, 90, Taken by Death

Funeral services were held Tuesday afternoon at the Ione Community church for Mathias Halvorsen, 90, who passed away May 11 at Pendleton.

He was born in Gudbrandsdalen, Norway on July 24, 1866, the son of Ann and Halvor Sangro. He had four brothers all of whom came to this country and took the name of Halvorsen when they became naturalized. The only sister stayed on the home farm and kept the family name of Sangro when she married.

Mr. Halvorsen arrived in Lexington in 1888 from Quebec, Canada and he lived in Morrow county the rest of his life except for about one and one-half years spent in Lonerock. He worked in a store in Ione for Joe Woolery in 1894, later opening one of his own with Bert Mason. After selling his interest to Mason he returned to farming from which he retired in 1946.

He was married to Mary Padberg Lieuallen in July 1900 and was a charter member of the Valby Lutheran church.

Survivors are two sons, Lewis of Ione and Henry of Medford; two stepdaughters, Mrs. Vela Eubanks, Portland, and Mrs. Letha Harr, Blackfoot, Idaho; 12 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Rev. Merlin Zier conducted the services and interment was in the Ione Oddfellows cemetery. Creswick Mortuary was in charge of arrangements.

on the Peck ranch this year.

A lifetime rancher, Peck has improved and held his soil in place on the ranch, a portion of which he has farmed for more than 30 years under lease from W. C. Sievers, Portland. He is assisted by his son, James, with the farming operations and gives the younger Peck much credit for following many of the conservation practices. Several tons of rock have been hauled off the ranch by Peck since moving there.

In addition to his wheat operation on slightly over 600 acres of the land, Peck runs about 80 head of Herefords by renting pasture, buying some hay and turning them on the stubble. All cattle are vaccinated and rotenone powder is used to control insects and grubs.

Trees are a special interest of Peck who has planted over 500 trees in areas where none grew before including 50 locusts, 25 Ponderosa pine, 25 mulberry, 30 Austrian pine and 200 caragana. Trees shade the ranch buildings and a garden supplies Mr. and Mrs. Peck with fruit and vegetables.

Sweepstakes for his dry-farmed products were won by Peck for his display in the first Morrow county fair in 1913. At that time Peck farmed with 24 head of horses and later owned the first combine in the county. Over the years he has consistently won blue fair ribbons on his grain, grass and garden entries.

Mr. and Mrs. Peck, who celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1954, homesteaded in the Rhea creek area for 16 years, beginning in 1906. A son, Harold, now operates the homestead ranch. Peck's father ranching in the Clark's canyon area, coming here from Ohio in 1893.

Children of Mr. and Mrs. Peck are Harold, James, Donald of Pilot Rock; Bud, Heppner; Glover, Parkdale; Mrs. Millard Nolan, Lexington and Mrs. Paul Morey, Portland. They have several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Peck is a charter member of Lexington Grange, has been master two years, a member of the Morrow county Farm Bureau and has been a cooperater with the

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### 700 Gallon Artesian Well Brought in on Sand Hollow Ranch

An artesian well flowing an estimated 600 to 700 gallons of water a minute was brought in on the O. W. Cutsforth ranch on the east fork of Sand hollow last week. The heavy flow of water was struck at only 49 feet.

The well drilling was exceptionally easy, Cutsforth reported, saying he struck a two-foot hard pan at 24 feet and was drilling in shale from there down. After the flow started the 12-inch hole washed out to 18 inches and an 18-inch casing was put in. It will be capped and the water used to irrigate about 40 acres of alfalfa.

### GOC PICNIC PLANNED

All members of the Ground Observer Corps and their families are invited to a GOC picnic to be held Sunday, May 26 at Hat Rock state park on the Columbia river above McNary dam. It will be a potluck affair with coffee, soft drinks and ice cream furnished.

### THE TOUR AND FIELD DAY WILL MARK THE CLIMAX OF THE COUNTY OBSERVANCE OF STATE CONSERVATION WEEK, MAY 19-25.

The tour and field day will mark the climax of the county observance of state Conservation Week, May 19-25.