

# Heppner Gazette Times

MORROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER  
The Heppner Gazette, established March 30, 1888. The Heppner Times established November 18, 1897. Consolidated February 15, 1912



ROBERT PENLAND  
Editor and Publisher  
GRETCHEN PENLAND  
Associate Publisher



Published Every Thursday and Entered at the Post Office at Heppner, Oregon, as Second Class Matter  
Subscription Rates: Morrow and Grant Counties, \$3.00 Year; Elsewhere \$4.00 Year. Single Copy 10 Cents.

## Leslie L Matlock

One of Heppner's best-known citizens, Leslie L. Matlock, died early this week. He was almost a legend in Heppner—definitely a man who played a great part in the city's history.

Because of the part he and his late friend Bruce Kelley played in the often-retold accounts of the Heppner flood of 1903, Les probably had more stories written about him than any other person who has ever lived in Heppner. He was a man who enjoyed his full life, all 84 years of it. He never bragged about his ride to Ione to warn of the coming flood, in fact, he ducked most questions about it, and in later years he was best known for his love of a deck of cards and his remarkable ability to recite many of the works of Shakespeare. He loved fine clothes and even as a man well over 80 he shared with no resident of Heppner the title of the city's best-dressed citizen. His place on Main street won't be filled.

Many, many things could be said about Les Matlock in an editorial for he was one of the few remaining links between Heppner of today and its remarkable past—he has played a part in both—but we feel that the most appropriate obituary this newspaper could give to any man is to again tell the "old" story as it was told to us by Les himself and printed in the Gazette-Times in the special Heppner Flood Commemorative Edition of June 11, 1953 on the 50th anniversary of that great tragedy. His own story is reprinted in its entirety:

### THE MATLOCK STORY —

"We Did Nothing That Somebody Else Couldn't Have Done"

No recording of the events during the time of the Heppner flood would be complete without Leslie Matlock's own story of the happenings on that Sunday and of the well-known ride that he and Bruce Kelly made down Willow Creek to warn the residents of Lexington and Ione of the water.

Numerous writers, some of them quite well known, have told and retold the story many times and Matlock tells it again here. It took persuasion to get him to give it, for he has indicated on more than one occasion that all the publicity is rather embarrassing. He strongly emphasizes that "We weren't trying to do anything smart, and we did nothing that somebody else couldn't and wouldn't have done under the same circumstances." He and Kelley just happened to think of it first.

A matter minutes or a twist of circumstances meant the difference of life or death to the inhabitants of Heppner when the tragic flood swamped the town Sunday afternoon fifty years ago, according to Leslie L. Matlock, who with his friend, Bruce Kelley, rode their horses over the hills to Lexington and Ione hoping to avert further loss of life that happened there.

In the afternoon, Matlock recalled that he returned to his room at the Palace hotel after having dinner with Dr. McSword at the home of his uncle, T. J. Matlock. After a call to the Abe Wells home, Dr. McSword and John Ayers later went to the George Conser home, which circumstance marked their fate.

Matlock dozed off in the murky extreme heat and was later awakened by claps of thunder. Going through the hall he reassured the worried waitresses that the storm would be harmless, and went out on the street where he stood with a young cigar maker watching the rain.

"Moments later we saw women running for the hill, so we called to the men in Swaggert's Saloon, now Bucknum's, and all fled through the storm to the hillside watching the destruction in horror."

"Bruce Kelley said to me," Matlock recalled, "Everyone on this creek will be drowned." I replied that "If we get some horses we can beat it down the creek." The idea took hold and Kelley said, "You get some wire cutters at Gilliam and Bisbee's and I'll get some horses at the livery stable."

Orve Rasmus helped me break in to get the wooden handled pruning shears we found and then we took off over the hill behind the bank, cutting fences where necessary. Kelley got his own horse but in the haste and excitement grabbed for me someone else's horse which I changed at the Frank Rainey place a mile or two below Lexington. We didn't talk much, except to call warnings at homes along the way. The flood water had already beat us to Lexington, but we felt we could make it to Ione before the water hit there. No one questioned our story and everyone along the way hurried to higher ground.

Though the flood water had subsided by the time it reached Ione, after the arrival of Kelley and Matlock, the townspeople showed their gratitude to the two young men by presenting each of them with a gold-headed cane inscribed "Presented by the people of Ione in grateful remembrance of heroic ride during flood at Heppner, June 14, 1903." This is still a proud possession of Mr. Matlock.

After remaining at Ione for part of the night, Kelley, Matlock, Bert Mason and others rode back to Heppner, arriving about daylight. Amid the destruction and desolation they learned that the worst had happened and those who were left joined in recovering bodies.

"My friends, John Ayers and Dr. McSword ran out of the Conser home when the water struck and were drowned. Mr. and Mrs. Conser themselves ran upstairs, which saved their lives, as the house remained intact as it was wept downstream to the Methodist church with a section of sidewalk through it," Matlock said.

Among other victims was Mr. Matlock's uncle, J. W. Matlock, who was pulled from an upstairs porch along with his son, Lee. The young man had thrown off his coat and managed to get to safety after trying unsuccessfully to rescue his father.

Most of the Abe Wells family, too, were drowned when the water tore their house apart. The body of Mr. Hanby, on whose farm the flood struck, about 7 miles on Balm fork, was found at the edge of Gale street.

People from some distances observed the flood cloud that day, Matlock said. A fellow named Pole Thompson, living five or six miles below Cecil, remarked to two cowboy companions that when that cloud broke there would be more water in Willow creek than had ever been seen in it before. Ben Swaggart, some 12 miles from Heppner on Swaggart Buttes, also saw the black ominous cloud.

The next day, Guy Boyer, then a lad living up Hinton creek, was sent on horseback to Echo where he took the train to Pendleton to announce the fate of Heppner. At the news, people, teams and horses came from Pendleton in record times and on dead runs to bring help to us.

(This story, with its editor's note lead in black face type, appeared in the June 11, 1953 Heppner Gazette-Times as it was told by Leslie Matlock.)

## THIRTY YEARS AGO

From the files of the Gazette-Times July 19, 1928

Lester Doolittle and family departed Tuesday morning for Centralia, Wash where they will remain until the first of September.

Mr and Mrs W G McCarty departed on an extended auto trip Tuesday expecting to visit their old homes in California, and enjoy a pleasant vacation.

Mrs O T Ferguson, Mrs Gene Ferguson, Mrs H R Ramsey and Mrs Andrew Olson were Pendleton ladies in the city on Tuesday. Here these ladies were joined by Mrs Raymond Ferguson and proceeded to the home of Mrs Vida Stickle in Blackhorse, giving her a birthday surprise party.

Joe Batty, Hardman ranchman, was a visitor in this city Saturday.

Dan Hanshaw started his combine on the Sand Hollow ranch on Monday evening.

A field of 200 acres of grain, belonging to C Hutchcroft and located near Morgan, was totally destroyed by fire on Monday afternoon.

A shipment of 22 double deck cars of lambs left the local yards this forenoon by special train. This bunch of lambs has been gathered up by Messrs McNamer and Thompson and their destination is Denver. Those contributing to the movement were Messrs C A Minor, Ellis Minor, R A Thompson and Lotus Robinson.

Some fruits and vegetables do not make satisfactory products when frozen. The include green onions, lettuce and other salad greens, radishes, tomatoes (except juice).

### General Rules For Freezing Both Fruits and Vegetables

1. Select suitable variety.
2. Freeze only fresh products of good quality and proper maturity.
3. Gather products in the cool of the morning; handle quickly; rush to freezer as soon as possible.
4. Keep in cool place while under preparation.
5. Prepare only small lots at one time; preferably 2 to 3 pounds.
6. Wash thoroughly and remove foreign materials, decayed, badly bruised immature or over-ripe products.
7. Label cartons with name of product, date, and other information you deem useful before starting actual preparation of the product. Special pens or waxed pencils are available for labeling frozen food cartons. A crayon may be used.
8. When using locker bags, press air out of unfilled part of bag before sealing.
9. Freeze and store at 0 degrees F or lower.

### New "Can" Or "Freeze" Jars

One of our large fruit jar manufacturers have come out this year with a streamlined version of the original freezer jars which can be used for either canning or freezing. They come in pints or half pint tapered jars. The half pints were introduced in order to provide a jelly and jam container which does not require

paraffin for sealing. However, they, like the larger tapered jars, are equally satisfactory for use in canning and freezing. If you're buying jars this year ask your dealer for these.

### Bulletins For The Asking

In our Morrow County Agent's office we have a number of good bulletins on freezing and canning of fruits, vegetables, and meats. Why not clip out the coupon below, paste it on a postcard and drop it into the mail for further information.

TO: Esther Kirmis  
Morrow County Home Extension Agent  
Heppner, Oregon  
Please send the following checked bulletins:

1. Freezing Fruits and Vegetables
2. Foods From the Freezer: Precooked and Prepared
3. Freezing Meat, Poultry, Fish, Seafoods and Game
4. Chicken in the Freezer
5. Chocolate Cake for the Freezer
6. Home Canning of Fruits and Vegetables
7. Home Processing of Fruit & Vegetable Juices

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

I spent two days of the past week in The Dalles visiting with Mrs Jane Schroeder, Wasco county home extension agent. Jane is a "Pro" in the home extension field having been in Wasco county for over five years before that time she served in her home state of Kansas. The state extension staff felt that if I saw another "Mid-westerner" in action in Oregon I'd surely benefit. So "Kansas" and "North Dakota" got together to discuss extension in "Oregon".

While in The Dalles, Jane took me out to see the fruit orchards. Cherries and apricots were being picked, and this North Dakota gal's eyes really "bugged out." Fruit in such abundance I had never seen!

When I got back to the office I looked for all the information I could find on apricots as I have a feeling many of you homemakers are buying or picking apricots right now and making plans for freezing, canning or jelly making.

Ripe apricots are golden yellow, tinged with rose. Check the background color for a uniform golden color. If it is greenish-yellow, the fruit is not fully ripe. Select fruit that is plump, well-formed and fairly firm. It takes from 10 to 14 apricots to make a pound.

If the 'cots are not fully ripe when you buy or pick them,

leave them in a fairly warm room to ripen. Then keep them covered and cold in the refrigerator.

Apricots are tart-sweet, tender and juicy in texture. They're ideal for out-of-hand eating, or they lend color, flavor and food value to salads and desserts. Apricots are a good source of vitamin A. Two or three medium apricots furnish about half of the day's needed Vitamin A. They're good for weight watchers too... each one has only about 20 calories.

Fresh apricot season is short. Enjoy apricots now. Plan to can or freeze your supply without delay.

If you wish information on the canning or freezing of apricots our office has several good bulletins. They're yours for the asking.

### Apricot Jam:

Wash the fruit carefully; then dip into boiling water for about a half a minute or until the skins slip easily. Plunge it at once into cold water for a few seconds, remove the skins, cut the fruit into halves, and discard the pits. To each pound of prepared apricots allow three-fourths a pound of sugar and 2 tablespoons of lemon juice. Crush the fruit, combine with sugar in alternate layers, and let stand until the sugar is dissolved, stirring meanwhile. Bring to boiling and cook, stirring constantly, until the fruit is clear and the jam is somewhat thick. Pour into hot sterilized jars and seal.

### Refrigerator Apricot Pie

1/3 pound sugar wafers  
1/2 cup butter or margarine  
1 cup confectioner' sugar (1/4 lb.)  
2 eggs, separated  
1/8 tsp. salt  
1 cup cooked thick apricot pulp  
1 cup whipping cream, whipped  
1. Cruch wafers very fine. Set aside 1/4 cup to use as a topping.  
2. Press remainder over bottom and sides of greased 9 inch pan.  
3. Cream butter or margarine and sugar. Add egg yolks; beat thoroughly.  
4. Add salt to egg whites and beat until stiff; fold into yolk mixture.  
5. Spread this mixture over the crumbs in pie pan.  
6. Spread apricot pulp over egg-sugar mixture.  
7. Spread cream over apricot layer and sprinkle with reserved crumbs.  
8. Chill several hours or overnight before serving.

## CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

IONE COMMUNITY CHURCH  
Rev Floyd S Bailey, pastor  
Church school and morning worship at 9:30 a. m.

ST PATRICK'S CHURCH  
Heppner  
Rev P J GAIRE, Pastor  
Masses,  
Sundays, 7:00 and 10:00 am.  
Weekdays, 7:30 am.

ST WILLIAM'S CHURCH  
Ione  
Masses: Sunday, 8:30 am.

LEXINGTON CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Rev Norman Northrup, Pastor  
Sunday school 10:00 am.  
Worship 11:00 am.  
Evening service, 7:30 pm.  
Prayer meeting Tuesday, 7:30 pm.

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Manager, Heppner Branch

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**"Chats With Your Home Agent"**

By ESTHER KIRMIS

Did you have an enjoyable Fourth of July weekend? I'm sure you did. I spent my weekend visiting "shirt-tail" relatives at Moses Lake and viewing one of the "eight Wonders of the World" - Grand Coulee dam. It was a sight I'll never forget and the colored lights that illuminated the falls at night are breathtaking.

I came back to Heppner with several boxes of frozen trout and redhorse that my friends so generously gave me. It reminds me that many of you must be in the midst of freezing and canning fruits and vegetables right now so this week's column will be devoted to that subject.

**Freezing**

There is no "out of season" for products of your garden and orchard - if you have a home freezer or space in a neighborhood locker plant. Freezing is one of the simplest and least time-consuming ways to preserve foods at home. It keeps the natural color, fresh flavor, and nutritive value of most fruits and vegetables better than other methods of home food preservation. Frozen fruits and vegetables are ready to serve on short notice because most of the preparation they need for the table is done before freezing.

Freezing is not necessarily recommended as the preferred way of preserving all products. What to freeze must be decided on the basis of family needs and desires, on freezer space and cost of freezer storage, and other storage facilities available.

**Cost of Freezing:**

Cost of owning and operating a home freezer may be expected to range from 18 to 28 cents a pound of food frozen, depending on rate of turn-over. On a pound basis, freezing costs decrease as the quantity of food frozen is increased. These costs are based on electricity used, cost of packaging materials, repairs and average freezer cost distributed over 10 years.

If you have doubts as to how well a fruit or vegetable will

freeze, it would be well to test it before freezing large quantities. To test freeze three or four packages and sample the food after freezing. This shows the effect of freezing only, not the

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Sun., Mon., July 20, 21

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Yul Brynner, Maria Schell, Claire Bloom, Lee J Cobb. Sunday at 4, 6:40.

Tues., Wed., July 22, 23

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