4,000 Witnessed First Rodeo at Heppner 40 Years Ago

people attending.

Files of the August 3, 1922 edition of The Gazette-Times give an interesting record of the first promotion of the Morrow County Rodeo. Its headlines read, "Initial Steps Taken to Put on Round-Up; Heppner People in Fayor of Wild West Show This on Round-Up; Heppner People in Favor of Wild West Show This Fall—Will Probably be Held at Same Time Tractor Caravan Visits Heppner." The story follows:

"At a meeting on Tuesday meeting, make their report and await instructions.

"The opinion expressed at the meeting was to the effect that twould require something like \$1500 from the citizens and business men of the community, and

By HELEN SHERMAN

Organized history of the Morrow County Rodeo traces back 40 years—to 1922, when the local cowboys and cowgirls their own "bucking party" after crops were in and everyone felt in the mood for a little celebration their own and after considerable discussion a committee on arrange—in the mood for a little celebration. their own "bucking party" after the town interested in the materials and everyone felt ter, and after considerable distinctions. And, strangely enough, it turned out a tremendous success with approximately 4,000 Latourell. This committee will take the preliminary steps in

THE

PLACE

"The date for Heppners big round-up has been tentatively selected, being the last week in September. Immediately following the big show in Pendleton. It is expected that many of the outlaws from the Umatilla city will be present to test the skill and landing ability of the local riders.

"Gentry Field has been sur-

"Gentry Field has been surveyed for the track and the work of putting in the fences, corrals and seats will commence soon, the committee only waiting for the lumber with which to do the work. They will be assisted in this by Mr. Swisler of Pendle ton, an authority on the arrangements of grounds for a show of this kind. The committee expects to put in comfortable seats with room for a large crowd.

"Arrangements are being made for a big '49 dance at the fair pavilion, at which amusements to suit all tastes will be furnished. This will not be any-thing like the traveling '49 show and dance, but will be strictly clean entertainment, although

informal in nature.
"All in all, as things are now shaping up. It appears that Heppner will have a round-up second only to the famous Pendleton show, and since it will be much more local in its nature it should furnish better enter-tainment even than the Pendle-ton Round-Up."

Big Event Anticipated

As plans progressed through following weeks, articles continued to stir interest, such as this one printed September 21,

"Rodeo days are drawing near, only seven more days left to dig out the sombreros, boots and spurs, and climb on the dapple-hued pony headed for Heppner town. A big time awaits you, asserts C. W. McNamer, in charge of arrangements, and no means are being spared to make the "wild west" contests the best ever.

best ever.
"Everything is ready to go. The big arena and race track at Gentry field have been put in A 1 shape and bleachers built on the side of the natural amphitheater that all may have an

urgent invitation for all student was the parades each day—

the boisterous amusement of the '49 dance, carried on in the adjoining pavilion. The '49 pavilion will take care of the wilder strain who would be carried back to the days of the six-shooter and whisky flask when catch cattle owner made his own law. Plenty of old-time gamb. law. Plenty of old-time gambling games will be carried on and all may try their skill against chance in exchange for rodeo money. At the pavilions Rodeo money will be the med-

Declared A Huge Success

After the event came the headline, "Heppner's First Rodeo
A Success, Crowds Totalling
more than 4,000 Witness Wild
West Production—Pageant Well
Managed and May Become Annual Feature Here." nual Feature Here.

"The success of Heppner's first boy race; Quarter-mile Saddle Rodeo, the fine manner in which race; Relay race; Half-mile

to be decided upon investigation and report of the committee."

Gentry Field Selected As Site
Two weeks later, dated August 17, 1922, a second report is given:

"The weather conditions were ideal, following the big rain on Tuesday, and the manner in which the events at the grounds were all pulled off combined to put the large crowds in daily agement that all will receive a 1922, a second report is given: agement that all will receive a attendance in the best of spirits.

"The date for Heppner's big square deal. Entries can now be received a strendance in the best of spirits. Record crowds were in the city made through J. J. Nys secre- Friday and Saturday and more

> "A nice feature of the Rodeo present.
>
> "Two dances will be in progress at the fair pavilions each evening. One for those tame individuals who do not care for dividuals who do not care for the being especially fine on Friday and Saturday. They were led by the officials and Queen Marjorie (Miss Marjorie Clark), followed by hundreds of cow-

and there was no one hurt, ex-cept one of the little mules from the Billy Padberg ranch, used in the bucking contest, which in some manner broke a front leg and had to be shot.

rodeo money. At the pavilions Rodeo money will be the medium of exchange, and will be accepted for dancing and at all concessions."

"The merry-go-round and Ferris wheel furnished much amusement for the kiddies and young folks, while others enjoyed the dances in the pavilion and helped along the Legion boys by partaking of refresh-ments at the "bar" and patronizing the various games, reminders of events long past.

"Awards were given in the following track and arena events: Bucking contest; Half-mile Cow-

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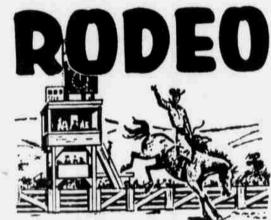
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