

Significant Developments

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EARLY CATHOLICS

Larry Lindsay introduces his History of St. Patrick's Parish with this paragraph: "The black-robed soldiers of the Church first came to this region when Eastern Oregon was merely the lonely and desolate scenery bordering the dreary path to the Pacific Coast. The roaming Indian tribes wandered wherever they pleased over the unbroken landscape of Wheeler, Morrow, Umatilla, and Gilliam Counties. Priests rode into this wild territory carrying their food, religious articles, and other needs in saddlebags. Catholics were widely scattered and these intrepid missionaries had to search the plains, hills, and canyons to find them. The homes of Catholics and non-Catholics alike were gladly opened to the welcome visits of these early Catholic priests."

The first Catholic building was in the Vinson area, a simple humble slabwood chapel built entirely by the Irish families who lived nearby.

THE 1878 INDIAN SCARE

1878 was the year of the Indian scare in July. Many families left Heppner, and in order to keep the place from being wholly deserted, as well as to protect women and children in case of attack, a fort was built. The scare was really not a war in this area and no citizen of Heppner was molested.

Business development moved ahead in the spring of 1879 when W.J. Leezer came from Umatilla to establish a hardware business, Minor & Theodore opened a grocery and variety store, and Dr. Shobe built a feed stable opposite the brewery.

1880 CENSUS FACTS

In 1880 Mr. P.O. Borg's jewelry business was established and Mr. C.E. Fell started a nursery business. The brewery which had belonged to A.J. Stevenson was sold to William Roche, and the Shobe drug store passed to C.M. Mallory. Heppner then had 318 persons according to the census. There was a Masonic Lodge that met once a month. J.G. Gilmore owned the City Hotel, Hall Brothers were blacksmiths, O.H. Hallock was postmaster and drug-

gist, J.D. Lockname was constable and operator of a variety store, Kirk and Basey were harness makers. General merchandise stores were run by Henry Heppner, Dave Herren, Maddock & Bishop, Morrow & Son. McKinnon & Co. were blacksmiths. Mrs. William Warren, the stone mason's wife, sold millinery. There were four saloons with Hawker & Munkers, William Kathan, Matlock Brothers and G.W. Swaggart as proprietors. S. Parker Garrigues and Julius Keithley were sawing lumber in a little mill and Matthew Lichtenthal was making boots and shoes. Ellis Minor was listed as a butcher. There were three physicians, Eugene R. Swinburne, Alfred Kinney and Lewis Shipley. (Just think—three doctors for less than 400 townspeople.) James Roberts listed his occupation as "gaming." Chinese natives were employed in the hotels and operated several laundries.

The 1880 census showed conclusively that the basic industry was stock raising and certainly sheep were predominant. Columbus Rhea, Albert Wright, O.T. Douglas, William Penland, John Alex Thompson and Daniel Boone Mulkey were sheepmen of

note. One of the stimulants to this industry was that Montana was getting into the production of wool and so the practice of trailing sheep east from Oregon was started and lasted over 15 years and provided a market for sheep not otherwise possible.

In spite of the three doctors Heppner lost six citizens during the winter of 1881-1882 when a smallpox epidemic swept throughout Eastern Oregon.

THE HEPPNER GAZETTE 1882

In 1882 The Heppner Gazette, a weekly newspaper, was started with Ed Redington as its publisher-editor. Mr. Shiach's 1901 history continues with, "By 1883 the town had grown to such proportions that the pioneer school house was no longer adequate to its educational needs and the erection of a larger building became a work of prime necessity. Before the year had passed a fine five-room structure stood on the site formerly occupied by the old building. (This served until 1892 when it fell before the wrath of the all-devouring fire demon.)"

"The two years following 1883 were characterized by phenomenal activity in Heppner, business houses springing into existence on every hand and dwelling places dotting the flat in all directions... But the town did not grow beyond its supporting territory, which had also been settling and developing at a rapid rate, its wealth of natural pasture luring to its bounds many hardy cattle and sheep men. The burden entailed upon the people in consequence of the distance to the seat of government was becoming more and more irksome, and the clamor for the organization of a new county was gaining volume. On February 16, 1885, Heppner was named as the temporary county of the new County of Morrow. The public spirited ci-

tizens of the town realized that though this favor of the legislature gave them a slight advantage, they must be alert and active if they would retain their prize, so they at once began the erection of a courthouse, obtaining funds by popular subscription entirely. This building they presented to Morrow County as a gift. It was no doubt designed as a sort of anchor to keep the advantages naturally accruing from the presence of the seat of local government from going to Lexington."

Considerable property changed hands in 1885; J.M. Hager purchased the mercantile business of J.L. Morrow & Son, J.D. Lockname opened the Belvedere, the firm of Minor, Dodson & Co. bought out D.A. Herren, and O.H. Hallock sold his stock of drugs to C.M. Mallory.

THE 1886 HEPPNER LEXINGTON CONTEST

In 1886 there was a stirring contest between Heppner and Lexington over the establishment of the permanent county seat. This "bitter, rancorous fight" showed growth somewhat. However on February 9, 1887, Heppner became an incorporated town. It was determined that the officers of the town should be a mayor, six councilmen, a recorder, a treasurer and a marshal. The first duly elected officers were: Henry Blackman, mayor; E.R. Swinburne, E. Minor, Thomas Morgan, J.B. Sperry, S.P. Garrigues and George Noble, councilmen; M.C. McDougall, treasurer; O.H. Hallock, recorder.

It is stated that during the first year of Heppner's existence as an incorporated town great changes were made. Sidewalks twelve feet wide and at a uniform grade were put on Main Street. Much street grading was done and the affairs of the town were

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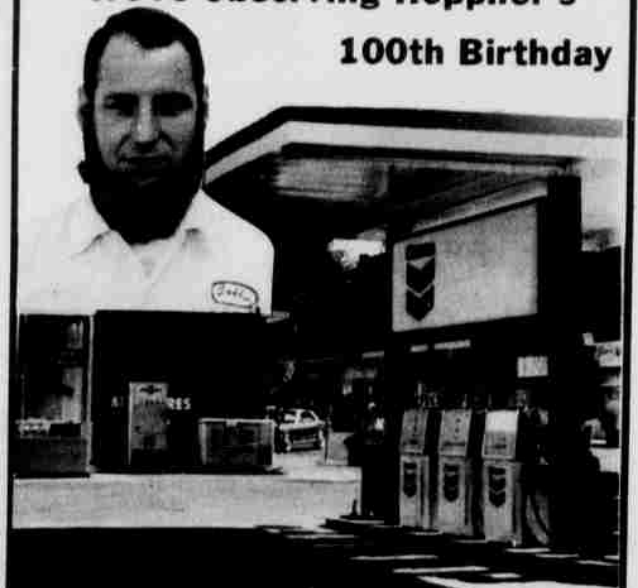
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