

SPRAY NEWS

Bicentennial Forum

Pioneer Profiles

OSCAR PETERSON'S FAMILY

By Justine Weatherford

A vital part of Morrow County centers about Valby with neighboring Gooseberry and Eightmile south of Ione and west by south of Heppner. Valby's heart is the old church that celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1961. This Swedish settlement has seen four and five generations of its original families flourish.

Among the early comers was John Edward Peterson who came to the United States from Sweden in 1869. He first lived with an uncle in Indiana and later moved on to Oregon, settling in Eugene. In 1894 he came to Arlington (Alkali).

One day he walked to Eightmile and staked a homestead which was later taken from him by a claim jumper. He took over another land in the Gooseberry-Eightmile area which is the original part of son Oscar Peterson's ranch.

Oscar E. Peterson, now approaching 83, loves this country; he has served on boards and commissions and as County Judge and has represented the county in state and regional organizations. Oscar and his wife Esther reared their three children on the ranch. Donald, the eldest farms nearby; daughter Eunice lives in Beaverton with her own family; youngest son Gerald lives on the homeplace with his parents and operates the ranch.

Among the founders of the Valby Swedish Evangelical Congregation were John Johnson, the great-grandfather of Esther, and John E. Peterson, the father of Carl, Oscar and Emma (of Heppner) who was chosen the original secretary of the church. He continued in this position until 1912. The minutes of the church administration from 1886 until today are carefully kept at the church. Oscar treasures a congregational record book which lists all of the families related to the church from its founding until today. Carl J. Peterson, 83, died in 1974.

John E. Peterson was an early director of the Ione Bank started by J.A. Woolery. Oscar owns an original stock certificate of this bank. Two brothers of John E. also came to Morrow County. Henning came in 1886, he lived on a homestead which was later sold to Ben Anderson when Henning moved to Portland. Aaron Peterson another brother, arrived 1888. He was married in Sweden where his son Richard was born. Henry, Ture, Victor and twins Elmer and Esther were born here. Henry, past 80 lives in Pendleton. Henry represented this area in the state legislature for 10 years. He has a son Ted and daughter Marjorie living in Portland, and sons Robert and Herbert farming at Valby. Ture's widow, Lucy, lives in Heppner; they have three

daughters, Richard and Esther live in the Willamette Valley and Victor and Elmer are deceased.

Oscar Peterson privately published a 71-page hardback book "75 Years of the Valby Lutheran Church" soon after the anniversary celebration. The book is well illustrated with photographs of the church and many of its members, beginning with a large picture of the dedication of the church building and cemetery in 1897. It includes interesting early farming pictures taken in the vicinity. Oscar has given the Heppner Library two copies of this book—the first was lost, and he presented a new copy just last week.

Giles French in the introduction to "Homesteads and Heritages," says "Mr. Oscar Peterson, who describes himself as a stubborn Swede, cast about for someone to write the county's history, and I was chosen." One of his chapters describes the early "Irish and Swedes." It reports "most of the early Swedes stayed by themselves and stayed away from towns as much as possible; they took no part in public affairs and in the 80s, when they were settling on hills in Eightmile and Gooseberry or in the flatter lands north and east of Ione, their names appear in the local paper only when they proved up on their homesteads."

"They did, however, progress religiously . . . by 1897 the Lutherans were sufficiently well off to name a building committee and to erect a little church, 24 by 36 feet, and to name it Valby (Shepard's Dell) although the location is on a windswept hill."

French continues, "Now nearly every family in the county is allied in some matrimonial relationship to one or more of the Swede families, and the Petersons, Bergstroms, Troedens, Swansons, Carlsons, Lundells, Lovgrens and Andersons are in every activity. Many are living on the original homesteads their ancestors took up over 80 years ago; verily the Swedes came to stay."

His pride in the achievements of all the good folk of Valby and his quiet satisfaction with his own active life are admirable.

Duck hunting poor

Duck hunting prospects on the controlled hunting area of Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge are poor. According to Refuge Manager John Kurtz, about 90 per cent of McCormack Slough is frozen. Approximately 125,000 mallards and 65,000 geese are wintering on Umatilla Refuge, but most of the birds are feeding off the refuge on private lands.

"We expect duck hunting to continue to be poor until we get some warmer weather to thaw the ice in the hunting area," said Kurtz.

The American Work Ethic

"Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today." Folk saying.

"I never did anything worth doing by accident, nor did any of my inventions come by accident, they came by work," Thomas Alva Edison.

"You can't eat for eight hours a day nor drink for eight hours a day—all you can do for eight hours is work. Which is the reason why man makes himself and everybody else so miserable and unhappy." William Faulkner.

In the largely self-sufficient society of colonial times, the individual worker could often see and sample the fruits of his labor immediately. On farms and plantations, in workshops and trading centers, working may have meant something more than merely "having a job." Maybe it was then that the phrase "the work ethic," was born. But what's "ethical" about work? In colonial days it was believed to be good in itself, a religious duty. The hardship of work was seen as a test of character, the routine as a source of discipline, the activity as a means of fulfillment, and success as a proof of moral worth. Do we still look at it that way? Or as a necessary evil? In those days there were craftsmen carving their own furniture and farmers tilling fields and carving

their own furniture and farmers tilling their own fields (not to mention slaves tilling fields and carving furniture for others). Now, although none are slaves, fewer and fewer Americans still work for themselves; more and more of us work in offices or factories, and in large organizations. Has the remoteness of the worker from the end product of his labor robbed that labor of some of its meaning? Or do we seek different rewards from the ones that workers sought 200 years ago? Has the tenure and status of our jobs become more important than the opportunities they give us for freedom and productivity? Does the work ethic still prevail among us?

Captain John Smith warns the young men of Jamestown in 1607 that if they persist in looking for gold instead of planting corn, they will not be fed.

Many of the early settlers are spiritual descendants of John Calvin. This great 16th century reformer preaches the glorification of God by action—sacrifice, labor, discipline. Thrift, sobriety and industriousness are considered prime virtues, and prove useful ones as well in a society that is rapidly moving toward a money economy and industrialization.

The wife of the early settler is a jack-of-all trades; she spins thread from wool or flax, weaves it into cloth, fashions the cloth into clothing, makes soap and candles, smokes meat, preserves fruits and vegetables; churns butter; brews beer; cooks and washes.

CAUTION LOOK UP!

Do not touch metal objects near a power line. Never approach a length of wire near any power line.

When moving a building or any high load that might be clear power wires, notify the power supplier. Never attempt to raise the wire yourself.

Watch out when using aluminum ladders near power lines or service drops. Better yet DON'T!

Never drill a well under a power line. If power wires pass your well and your pump, make sure, unplug at each point so as to avoid accidental contact with wires.

Green electricity and surge being moved on roads or highways can cause a contact with overhead wires. CAUTION—LOOK UP!

Never install a television antenna within striking reach of a power line. If you already have such an installation, plan to move it to a safe location. Better notify your power supplier so he can de-energize the line before you move it.

Who would build a building or place a pole under a power line? It happens all too frequently, and the cost can be high in terms of life or serious injury.

Be careful and alert when conducting digline operations or loading with boom trucks near power lines. Wires and cables can be a lethal mix.

Rural Electrification by Rural Electric Coops began 40 years ago nationally.

Columbia Basin Electric Co-op

Columbia Basin Electric Co-op—serving the electric energy needs of 2010 square miles of Gilliam, Morrow, Wheeler, Sherman and Umatilla Counties.

HEPPNER 676-9146

I was privileged today to read three letters from Sandy Britt to her parents here, the Marvin Britts, and I would like to share a few excerpts.

Sandy is in missionary work in Africa, Accra Ghana, the capitol city and the U.N. center in West Africa.

Primarily, Sandy wishes to allay any fears the home-folk may be entertaining concerning the cannibalistic intent of her African neighbors. Right, Sandy? She reports Accra as beautiful, of greater proportion and population than our largest city and, she states ultra-modern.

Also, unbelievably inflationary, one pound of peanut butter (Skippys, no less) reducing \$3 to pennies.

At Jos for a short period, elevation 4,000 ft., Sandy commented, "if one turns for a moment from the grass-roofed huts it is enough like Eastern Oregon to give one a painful twinge of nostalgia."

Tall bushes of crimson poinsettias grow in profusion in Ghana.

A package mailed Aug. 4 had just reached there.

One may buy many brands of hair straighteners at most unlikely places, while hair rollers and other curling devices are not to be found.

Sandy took a plane from Lagos for Accra Ghana and, due to time change, reached her destination fifteen minutes prior to her departure! Are you following? Don't. Information misleading.

To make long distance calls one must book ahead, state the number of minutes and pay for that amount in full, before an operator can clear your call time.

Lastly, Sandy, while working with WAAST, West Africa Advanced School of Theology, found a dedication sign on the pulpit there which read, "In Loving Memory of Leslie Vandeford, his son Jack, Fossil, Oregon." Small World.

Sandy, eldest daughter of Marvin and Louise Britt, was born in Spray and set her goal in the missionary field at a remarkably early age. This community, her church, her friends, wish her well in her Christian endeavors and guidance in the New Year ahead.

Larry Brisbois was here over the holidays and has moved his family to Boardman where he has been employed the past month with Eastern Oregon Telephone Co. Prior to this, Brisbois has been with the local Blue Mountain Telephone Co.

The Don Troxells visited their daughter and family in their new home at Boardman New Years Day.

June Troxell, President, called a special meeting of the Ladies Auxiliary of the American Legion on Friday at City Hall where Celia Reed and Edith Chapman were recipients of special awards, in recognition of their many years of service in this organization. Mrs. Reed received a plaque in observance of her 27 years as secretary, while Mrs. Chapman was awarded a pin honoring her 50 years of membership and services rendered.

The Jack Sittons were here from Kinzua Friday for a day with Virginia's mother, Cora Burnside.

Mr. and Mrs. Herman Munjar and the Loy Munnars were in Burns Thursday where they were dinner guests at the home of the latter's daughter and family, Dick and Linda Cole and son Richard.

Bobby Kelsay has spent a few days here from John Day visiting his mother, Laurel and adding to her wood supply. He left Saturday for Heppner where he will get better acquainted with his new grandson, Travis Matthew, son of Donna and Terry Hughes, who arrived Dec. 30, weight 7 lbs, 3 1/2 oz.

Bobby's daughter Sandy, who spent the holidays in Heppner, will return to John Day with her father.

Visitors at the Don Griffith ranch home through the week included Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Toll and Terry and Mr. and Mrs. Brian Adams, all of Prineville; Mr. and Mrs. Ted Toll, and Stacy, Heppner, Merna and Billy Richards, Spray, Beverly Goebel and Deb Denny, Pendleton.

On Monday, Dec. 29, Don and Joanne, with their sons, John and Gib, made a business trip to Pendleton.

Dr. and Mrs. John Titus have been recent visitors at the home of Judge and Mrs. Andrew Leckie.

Among those at the county seat this week were Josephine Howell, Laurel Kelsay, Alta Spaulding, Jodi Brisbois and Little Brick, Mimi Williams and the Jerry Osborns.

Mrs. Sid Britt, with Marty, Shawn and Libby Dawn and her mother, Dixie Dawn Wiley of Echo visited Monday in Spray with Mimi Williams and a number of other relatives and friends.

Ted, Rocky and Benny Britt returned to their home in Pilot Rock Monday evening, having spent a few days here at the home of their grandfather, the Roy Britts.

Ray Britt drove a bus load of Spray youngsters and chaperones to John Day Friday evening for roller skating.

The Odell Adams left for Kennewick WA, Saturday morning to return their grandson, Paul Shen, home following the holidays and were accompanied to Heppner by Edith Chapman who will spend a month at the home of her son, the Mick Chapmans at Pilot Rock.

Post holiday visitors at the home of Billy and Anne Chapman are the Oakley Otts with Troy, Kelli and Ami from Oakridge. The Otts are visiting other relatives in Spray and the Ray Rectors in Fossil.

Johnnie and Bessie Butler are somewhat improved following their recent illnesses. Their condition necessitates a doctor's observance however and they will go to Prineville early in the week.

Jerene Enyart has been ill and confined to her home the past week.

Mayor and Mrs. Gus Strecker have returned from their holiday vacation in Portland and Willamette Valley points. Jerry and David Burris came with them for a short stay.

Mrs. James Bowler has resumed her duties at the post office following a few days illness.

We fold up the weekly news sheet on rather a chilly note. Old Man Winter making manifest his intentions, a frosty finger directing the mercury downward.

Crispy days and jolly snowmen. Cold nights and the coyote's anticipative howl, heralding the arrival of a new born calf or lamb. The two faces of winter.

**G-T Want
Ads Pay**

H&R Block Tax Service

will be in Heppner every Thursday, starting January 15, in motor home at Cal's Arco.

Hours 10 a.m.—5 p.m.,
later appts. taken.

More information contact
Hermiston Office, 567-8498

THE INCOME TAX PEOPLE
H&R BLOCK Co.

1025 North First St.
Hermiston

Farm record class

The Farm Record Keeping class will be held at the Columbia Basin Conference Room in Heppner, reports Harold Kerr, County Extension Agent. The session will begin at 1:30 p.m., Monday, Jan. 12, 1976 and will also be held on Tuesday, Jan. 13. Time for the Tuesday session will be set by the participants.

Farmers, ranchers, and their wives should find this session very helpful. The purpose of the two day session is to give those attending ideas and suggestions for keeping day by day farm records.

Manning Becker, Oregon State University Farm Management specialist is the instructor.

Everyone is welcome to attend this informative and educational session. There is no admission or charge for the class.

MOTORCYCLES COOKING OIL SHOES

Brought to you by the Union Pacific Railroad People.