

Sifting through the TIMES

With Justine Weatherford



Fifty Years Ago

University of Oregon President Dr. Arnold Bennett Hall addressed a group of forty parents at the Episcopal parish house Monday evening. Dr. Hall headed a group of six who visited Heppner on a tour to promote mothers and dads associations. The meeting was arranged by Mrs. W. P. Mahoney, representing parents, and W. R. Poulson, representing alumni.

"Heppner's winter egg supply went up in smoke." Thus announced Arnold Pieper, who farms in Pieper Canyon northeast of the city, in telling of the fire which consumed a new chicken house and 160 pullets on his place about 10 o'clock Sunday morning, netting him a loss of \$1,000.

W. Claude Cox, manager of the Morrow County Creamery and Clair Leannah Cox, his wife, have awarded the contract for construction of a modern reinforced concrete building to house the creamery on the lot recently purchased from the city of Heppner on the corner of Center and Chase streets, to Harry Johnson and Henry Crump, local contractors. Work will start immediately on the building, 40 x 60 feet, with a boiler room, 20 x 24 feet, a total of 2400 square feet of floor space.

The Pomona Grange met Saturday with Rhea Creek grange as host. Dinner was served to 200. Disappointment was felt because of the inability of Julius L. Meier to be present.

two new footbridges across Willow Creek were received by the city council which plans to replace the old wooden bridges. The lower lane bridge was condemned and closed to all traffic early last summer.

Apparent low bidder is George E. Beard, Beaverton, who bid \$9,287 for the two new concrete and steel bridges.

Residents and city officials of lone watched with pleasure last Thursday and Friday as water poured from a newly drilled city well and flowed down Main street in a generous stream.

The new well, drilled by G.M. Janssen, lone driller only about 100 feet from the old city well, completed its 24-hour test Friday morning, checking out at over 7,000 gallons per minute. To make things even nicer, the 7,000 gallons were the maximum capacity of the test pump. The well appeared to have an even greater capacity.

The Chamber of Commerce field lighting fund was richer by more than \$350 as a result of the special non-conference game between Heppner and Burns last Friday, which Burns won 27 to 13. Over 700 witnessed the first game held under the new lights and heard R.G. "Nig" Borleske, former Whitman College coach, praise the chamber and the people of Heppner for getting the lights installed.

Five Years Ago

Bob Ewell, Tri-County Health Service officer, announces that a survey of the three counties (Gilliam, Morrow and Wheeler) is planned.

Twenty-five Years Ago

Bids for the construction of

Residents will be asked to complete a simple form and return it to the health service department.

October marks the first anniversary of the Heppner Child Development Center. Monica Swanson, director of the center, commented on the growth of the center, "from, not quite twenty-five dollars and one large bare room to this." The empty room now has been decorated into a brightly painted center that cares for almost thirty children. The original board of directors included Linda Johnson, Carol Goodyear,

Anne Doherty, Joyce Grasser, Don Cole and Cathy Peck.

Hal Whitaker, who was responsible for building the partitions, lockers and fence for the center, received a "Voluntary Service Award" from the 4Cs Council.

Seventy-five people attended the first annual meeting of the Morrow County Historical Society, Sunday, Oct. 5, in the Lexington Grange Hall. Guest speaker was Larry Smitten, Pendleton historian.

The Riverside Pirates continued their unbeaten football winning streak as they defeated the Heppner Mustangs 19-6.

Heppner, Arlington visit with college reps

Students from Heppner High School will go to Pendleton High School for a meeting with representatives of the seven state colleges and universities on Thursday, Oct. 16, at 9:30 a.m.

And on Friday, Oct. 17 at 9:30 a.m. students from Arlington High School will go to The Dalles High School for the same program.

This program supplements the counseling programs of Heppner and Arlington High Schools by giving students first-hand information about program of study offerings, admission requirements, housing, costs to attend, financial aid, scholarships, and other information important to post-high school planning.

Parents are also encouraged to attend the program which will feature information sessions with representatives from Eastern Oregon State College, Oregon College of

Education, Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon State University, Portland State University, Southern Oregon State College, and the University of Oregon.

The Oregon State System of Higher Education college conference program extends invitations to all public and private high schools in Oregon.

Time to plan for Artifactory

Its time to begin thinking about the "Artifactory" again. This year's ninth annual arts and crafts fair, sponsored by the Heppner-Jone branch of the American Association of University Women, will again be held at the Fairgrounds. This year it will be held on Sat., Dec. 6, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. One card-table space costs \$5 for the day.

Local artists and craftsmen interested in selling, demonstrating or displaying their hand-crafted items or Christmas-baked goods should contact one of the following women to reserve a space. Please let them know if any special arrangements need to be made (such as electrical outlets, backdrops). Please call Bobbette Hedman, (days) 676-5578, Inez Erwin, 676-5806 or Marie Boor, (eves) 422-7563.

BMCC Board to meet in Heppner

The Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC) Board of Directors will meet in Heppner on Wed., Oct. 15, at 7:30 p.m. at the Heppner High School Library.

During the meeting there will be an open time for individuals to ask questions and voice their concerns. Nancy Brownfield, BMCC area coordinator, will be on hand for the meeting.

Native son

By Justine Weatherford

The history of Emile Groshens' family, which involves several other Morrow families, begins in Alsace-Lorraine, that region along the French-German border which has been a prize in several wars between those two countries. From the 700's until the 1500's it was under German rule, then France gained control by slow stages. The people fought all efforts to turn them into Frenchmen but the French Revolution of 1789 brought a change of heart. The inhabitants became so French in spirit that more than 50,000 moved to France when Germany took over their territory in 1871.

The Germans resented the loss of the prosperous area after World War I, but regained control of the area in World War II. The Allies drove the Germans out in 1944-45 and France again took control of the entire region.

The Groshens and Hisler families were living in Alsace-Lorraine when France lost the territory in 1871. They had been born Frenchmen, but were now ruled by Germany and the men were subject to conscription in the German Army. Emile's father, Louis, had to serve in the German forces for three years; however, his brothers and many other young folks eagerly migrated to America to avoid German conscription. An older Groshens son, Charles, came first to Portland, Oregon, where he found employment driving a horse-drawn streetcar. Next Louis came, and soon Helene Hisler, then 16, and her brother, 17-year old Paul Hisler, came from the same area to Portland. They came because their aunt was married to Charles Groshens.

Louis Groshens decided to move to Eastern Oregon. He came to Morrow County to do ranch work for Jim Hager on Willow Creek. Paul Hisler, the first of three Paul Hislers here, also came to Morrow County where he found ranch work on Little Butter Creek with rancher Ed Day. His son Paul, grandson Paul and great-grandchildren still live near the ranch where he was first employed and later owned. The Hislers have added to the original Day Ranch. Marguerite Chapin, Heppner, is a daughter of the first Paul, sister to the second Paul, and one of Emile's cousins.

Young Helene Hisler found work in Portland as a maid in the home of the French Consul Henri Labbe. Louis Groshens worked on the Hager place for three years when he took out a homestead claim on Mallory Creek in the Blue Mountains. He went to Portland and married Helene and brought her out to the Mallory Creek homestead. This was surely quite a change from the lovely Portland Labbe home to the mountain homestead where her husband raised horses.

Before too long the couple traded their homestead for 240 acres on Rhea Creek where they established the home where their five children were born—Claire, Emile, Lorraine, Odile and Mae. (Claire in time married Leonard Gilliam. Heppner's Don and Condon's Louis Gilliam are their sons, Emile's nephews.)

Emile Louis Groshens was born in 1896 and lived on the Rhea Creek ranch until 1936. His family gradually accumulated more land and ran sheep and cattle. About 15 years ago Emile sold the place to the Reed family who still have cattle there.

Emile's schooling began at District School No. 3 on Rhea Creek. After a few years, as their family grew, the Groshens began spending their winters in Heppner and their children attended the old town school which stood where the hospital is now. They went through the grades on the building's first floor and moved upstairs to attend high school classes. While Emile was in high school, the new high school was built. It is now called the junior high. He attended the new school until he left in 1917 to work on the family ranch.

Sheep, wool, cattle and horses sold well during World War I years, but after the war farming was sort of up and down. Emile explains that all shipping from Grant County came through Heppner because the railroad ended here. The town was quite busy with sheep, wool and cattle trading and buying of family supplies. Many wool buyers came here from Boston. Most of the sheep were shipped east, but most of the cattle went to Portland. Wool was baled and sold at auction. Emile was only five years old at the time of the tremendous 1903 flood. The mother and children out on Rhea Creek weren't really very involved, but the father brought a team into town and stayed for ten days to help clean up the mess.

During Emile's young years, the family, like most other families living on ranches, only came to town a couple of times each year. However after their children were all school age, the Groshens kept a winter home here. Emile recalls that there was a Catholic grade school here then. When the Catholic youngsters reached high school many of them went to the academy in Pendleton. During the winters the Groshens family went to Sunday school and church at the Christian Church.

In 1913 Emile's dad bought a car, a Studebaker. There were not many other automobiles in the county then. The roads



This picture of Emile Louis Groshens was taken in Portland when he was 26 years old.

were just wagon roads and were rough to travel.

Emile's father, Louis Groshens, died in 1918, but his mother, Helene, lived much longer. Emile recalls that 1918 was a bad year. A great fire in Heppner destroyed the old Palace Hotel and three blocks adjoining it. Somehow the fire left the Dr. McMurdo home standing, but the Groshens winter home next door (where the Dr. Tibble's home is now) was burned completely. "Fires then meant almost a total loss as few folks had any insurance. Early fire departments were low on equipment and training and were unable to curtail fires that really got going."

In 1931 Emile married Bernice Sigbee (a sister of Elaine George) and they continued to operate the Groshens home ranch until 1936 when the ranch home was struck by lightning and burned completely. No one was injured, but the decision to sell the land was soon made.

Emile and Bernice bought the Tom Beymer Ranch on Hinton Creek (where Floyd and Lorena Jones are now). He continued to run sheep and cattle until 1950, the year Bernice died. He then sold the ranch to the Joneses and retired.

Emile moved into the Lanham Apartments in town for several years. In August 1962 Emile and Ola Mae Renson, a school music teacher, were married. Emile bought the Garnett Barratt home on North Gilmore where he and Ola Mae still reside. Ola Mae continues teaching a few advanced piano pupils.

Emile has watched many significant changes in this county. He tells about Heppner's local electrical generating plant which was fired by wood. The powerhouse stood where the town swimming pool is now. Gradually horse power gave way to autos and tractors. How exciting were the first radios, around 1920. It was about 1930 when the first TV came. Emile saw his first airplane when barnstorming flyers came here to the county fair and offered rides for \$10.

Asked if the Victor Groshen family was related to him, Emile said that Vic's dad, Old Vic, was his uncle, his father's brother. He doesn't know when or why that branch dropped the final "s" from the family name.

Emile said that at one time there were seven saloons in Heppner. Old Vic had a saloon where the Gilliam & Bisbee Building now stands. His son, now Victor, Sr., served the City of Heppner many years, and his grandson, Victor Jr., who is with the state police here, now has grown sons.

Emile joined the Elks Lodge in Heppner in 1918 and now is the third oldest member. He says that life gets lonesome after many of one's friends have died. He especially misses Ed LaTrace who was a friend from early school days, and Harold Cohn and Scott Furlong with whom he enjoyed fishing.

At 82 years, Emile's health stays good, and he enjoys gardening and walking about. He stands six feet tall and still weighs the same 198 pounds that he has carried for years. He and Ola Mae enjoy TV and keep up with current affairs. They often attend the Senior Citizen dinners.

Looking back over his lifetime here, in spite of various ups and downs, Emile Groshens declares something that much of the world's population can not state—"I have never in my life gone hungry."

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