

Rodeo has become more professional

The forerunner of our present Rodeo began in the days when everyone thought each had the fastest race horse or the meanest bucking bronco. Many a cowboy bit the dirt, when these unsponsored contests took place. No doubt Main Street saw many such contests, as well as the area below the school tennis courts across Willow Creek from the old fair site on Main Street.

Perhaps because pedestrians objected to being ran down, the first Heppner Rodeo was sponsored by local business men, headed by L.V. Gentry, C.W. McNamer, and C.H. Latourell. It was established on what was called Gentry Field. L.V. Gentry later deeded this land, which is the present location, to the county for an established site. Bleachers were built, and an oval race track was encircled by fence. The rodeo was held during the last week in September following the Pendleton Rounup. In 1922, 4,000 people witnessed this first three day show. Dances, as well as games of chance were held each night at the pavilion downtown. A ferris wheel and a merry-go-round delighted youngsters; airplane rides were given by an entrepreneur from Walla Walla. Marjorie Clark (Riding) the 12 year old daughter of M.D. Clark, was selected as the first queen, and a large parade was staged on Main Street.

The history of the rodeo involves many changes, not limited to selection and sponsoring the court. Horses were originally snubbed from another mounted horse, and the bronc riders turned loose to decide how to dismount if they did not buck off. Riders are now turned out of chutes, given eight seconds to



Colleen (Kilkenny) Greenup was 1945 Queen

make a qualified ride, and are saved the agony of biting the dirt by pick-up men, who skillfully pluck riders off the back of a rearing, plunging animal. Rodeo animals are not usually run in off the range, but now are being raised specifically for this purpose, enjoying putting their energies against a man, and are well cared for and highly valued.

The expertise and skills from roping, riding and barrel racing have become a science, rather than a matter of luck.

The sought after honor of becoming a member of the Morrow County Fair and Rodeo Court is still a tradition coveted by many horse-loving girls of this county. At first,

candidates were selected by those in charge of the rodeo, but by 1934, girls were sponsored by the Granges. Later, the Wranglers riding club sponsored a girl and at times Boardman, also has candidates sponsored as princesses. Summer dances were held, where jitney dances determined the selection of the queen. Admission to each short band selection was 10 cents and tickets were good for one vote for a girl to become queen. In 1939, the Queen was selected by the Rodeo Committee from former past princesses, and four princesses were selected by Granges and sponsors. Attire for court members changed from riding skirt habits to pants and blouses, to pant suits, and the itinerary varied with increased mobility. Presently, the courts spend the summer traveling to numerous rodeos, attend organizational meetings, and are involved in all types of fair and rodeo promotion.

1985 will indeed see a very much alive Rodeo that will be challenging and exciting to watch, and presided over by a Court of five very skillful and lovely young ladies.



Local musicians to perform



Marti Baker (left) and Wanda Riley will provide music

Singers Marti Baker and Wanda Riley will appear in two mini-concerts on the stage in the main fair exhibit hall at 3 p.m. on both Thursday and Friday.

Marti and Wanda are well known to local audiences from their performances in musicals here. Wanda played the title role in "Annie" last fall and Marti is studying music and voice at Blue Mt. Community College where she was in a music group that went on tour to Hawaii this spring.

The performers promise that their program at the fair will feature a variety of types of songs.

For Last Minute Fair & Rodeo Items ✓ Us Out

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Chaperone effectively co-ordinates Court



(left to right, back) Princess Cindy, Chaperone Ginger, Princess Sheila. Front Princess Stacey, Queen Bridgett and Princess Bobette

The job of Court Chaperone may sound like one of excitement, opportunity and fun, and basically it is, but behind the scenes, it's a full time job. Court chaperone, Giner O'Brien devotes many hours a week co-ordinating dates, times, and appear-

ances for the five girls as they represent our 1985 Morrow County Fair and Rodeo with beauty and personality. We have a fantastic court this year, says a rodeo spokesperson. "They exemplify, talent, personality, and beauty, but it takes Ginger to help them and get them there." The finishing touches are

hers and she should get some of the credit. There have been times just prior to riding out in a parade or Grand Entry when you could find her running around with a polish cloth, cleaning boots and wishing each girl well. She's always there; look right behind the court!

Coast to Coast
TOTAL HARDWARE

Welcomes you to the

Morrow County Fair & Rodeo.

Stop in and see us —
We can Help You

