

Private 'Farm Ponds' Store Precious Irrigation Water for Valley Farmers

By HARRY NORDWICK
Mail Tribune Staff Writer

It used to be that the only dam builders were the government and the beavers.

Recently, however, various private individuals with government assistance have constructed numerous "farm ponds" to store precious water to turn dry land into fertile irrigated soil.

Here in the Rogue valley the biggest step to date in such a project is the banding together of five members of the Sams

Valley Irrigation association in a joint project to get water for about 400 acres of dry land in Sams Valley.

Complete in December

Tree clearing on the dam site in Ramsey canyon on the Cliff ranch was completed on Aug. 20 and dirt moving for the dam and dikes began on Aug. 27. The reservoir is expected to be completed in December.

The five interested farmers, George Loftin, Frank and Albert Straus, Wes McDonough,

Earl Pettley and Burle Burrenson, are cooperators with the Sams Valley-Beagle soil conservation district. Construction work is being financed individually and with the Farmers Home administration.

The Ramsey canyon project is the first of its kind in the SV-Beagle district, Lester James, district chairman, said. Robert B. Miller, Soil Conservation service engineer, who works with the district, helped the association with the selection of the

storage site and on plans and specifications for the reservoir and canal system.

The dam is being built by the Stearns Construction Co. and the association has hired Harry Musson as construction foreman. Diversion ditches are being constructed from two adjoining drainages to the 200-acre watershed of the dam site itself; thus the runoff from more than 1,200 acres will be stored by the reservoir.

Dam capacity will be 1,200 feet, or enough water to cover 1,200 acres with 1 foot of water. The main dam will be 53 feet high and 375 feet long, with the largest section a 1,200-foot dike, which is to be 32 feet high, and another shorter dike. Water backed up by the dam and dikes will cover 50 acres of land. A 2-mile channel will be constructed down to an unnamed creek, which will take the reservoir water to the individual farms via its distribution.

Each Will Irrigate 80 Acres

Each one of the five participating owners will put the water onto 80 acres of his land. Clem H. Ault, Soil Conservation service technician, said that the land to be irrigated had been classified by his agency as Class I and II. The two classes are the finest type of land for agricultural production and continued use under a conservation system of farming, he explained. This land is located about 600 feet below the dam site in elevation.

On a smaller scale than this joint project is the reservoir in use by James, SV-Beagle district chairman. With pond water he irrigates 20 acres of hay and pasture. The forage output has increased too. In time he'll increase his herd of milk cows from 14 to 24 head. Up to this year he fed hay 10 months out of the year. With irrigation, he won't have to buy hay.

When James moved to his 95-acre Sams Valley farm east of Gold Hill from Covina, Calif., in 1948, he had about 25 acres of dry land crops. From citrus experience with irrigation around Covina and the assistance of the district's technicians, he constructed a 60-acre foot pond at a cost of \$3,300. With this he irrigates 10 acres of improved pasture and 10 of hay.

The pond site was an eight-acre oak and pine covered hollow which had to be cleared and dammed at one end with a 775-foot long fill. Highest point in the fill is 22 feet. A concrete outlet structure in the dam provides drainage during the high-water periods. Most of the water comes from watershed runoff.

James uses a 7½-horsepower electric motor, pumping 180 gallons a minute, to operate his portable sprinklers, which have nine-gallon a minute heads. Pump and sprinkler installation cost \$2,500.

Forage Stands Up Well

Ten acres of irrigated pasture, seeded the fall of 1952 to Ladino clover, Akaroa orchard grass, broadleaf lotus and alta fescue, was grazed from April into fall in this season. The forage mix seemed to stand up well under continuous pasturing. He follows a system of rotation grazing on his new pasture, which is fenced into four grazing units. A unit is subjected to three days grazing followed by a nine-day rest period.

The new irrigated hayland is producing four cuttings a year. On April 23 he seeded the acreage in alternate rows of two mixtures: Talent alfalfa and Akaroa orchard grass and Talent and alta fescue. He got two cuttings from the stand the first season, but is hoping for four next year.

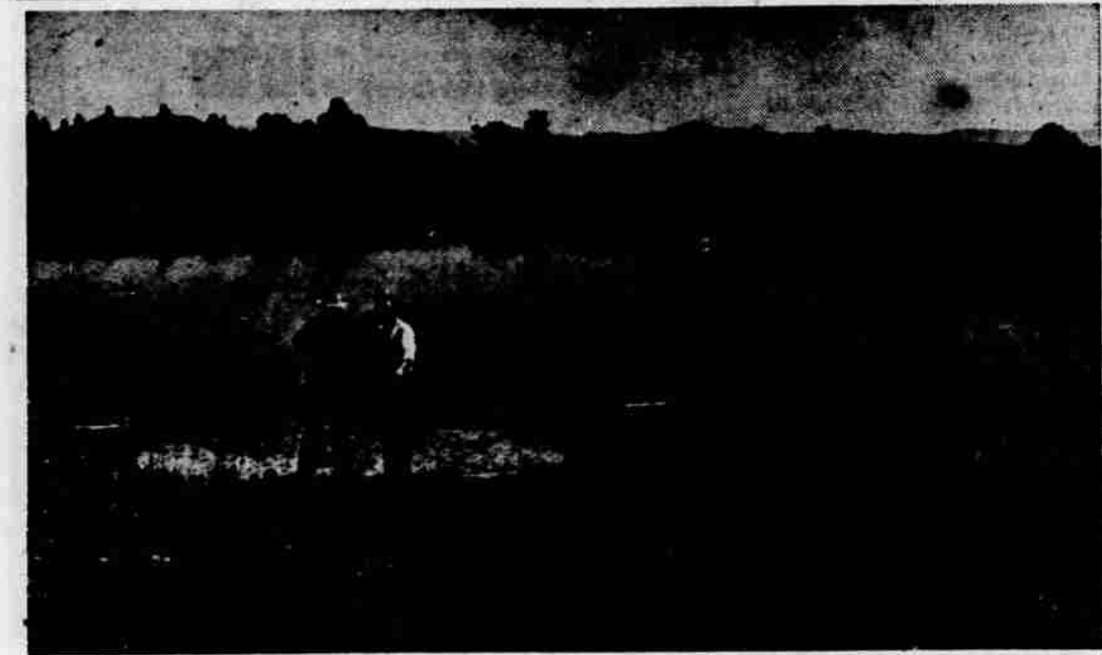
Likes Talent-Akaroa

Of the two hay mixtures, James likes the Talent-Akaroa the best, because "it got established quicker, stood out better and is much leafier than alta fescue."

Besides his production, James has added a new home sport to his farm life. That's fishing. The made-to-order lake was stocked with blue-gill fingerlings in April and bass fingerlings in July. Some of the blues now weigh three-fourths of a pound, and the bass average in length from 6 to 7 inches. The growth indicates an excellent food supply and also some fine catches to come.

Stratford on Avon, Shakespeare's birthplace, did not always reverse its most famous son. Once it considered young Will a ne'er-do-well, "fallen into the bad company of actors." In 1585, scarcely turned 21, this glove-maker's son left home under suspicion of poaching deer.

Puerto Rico has a total area of about 3,400 square miles.



JAMES RESERVOIR—Pictured is the 60 acre-foot pond constructed on the Lester James farm in Sams Valley. With water stored behind the 775-foot dam, right, James irrigates 20 acres of pasture and hay. The owner is pictured with Clem Ault, Soil Conservation service technician, standing between the concrete outlet structure, which provides drainage during high water periods. The water is applied to the acreage from a motor-driven sprinkling system. Technical assistance in reservoir construction came from the Sams Valley-Beagle Soil Conservation district technicians.

—(Soil Conservation Service Photo)

NEW METHOD USED IN CONSTRUCTING BIG BEAR CREEK ORCHARD BUILDING

One of the major building projects of the Rogue river valley this summer provides a type of construction—the tilt-up method—which is unique in southern Oregon.

The method, a type of precast construction, is being carried out in one of two major building jobs at Harry and David's Bear Creek orchards south of Medford on Highway 99. \$250,000 Cost

The two buildings, one scheduled to be a new packing house and the other a warehouse, will cost about a quarter of a million dollars before equipment is installed, according to Harry Holmes, owner.

The warehouse construction is utilizing the new building method, which is adapted for warehouse construction, according to Leslie Poole, Portland engineer, who designed the structure. Poole stated that pre-casting of the building's concrete walls before they are put in place was the result of an attempt by construction firms to cut down increasing building costs in the lumber and labor fields.

The warehouse is to be 100 by 280 feet, with a concrete floor, walls and two 50-foot truss-type wooden spans with asphalt layer of roofing material.

Poured on Floor

The 5-inch concrete floor was laid first and then 37 wall panels, of which about 13 are alike, were poured to the right size on top of the floor, allowing a minimum of 21 days for the concrete to cure, raising of the walls began last Tuesday at 10 a.m. with all of one side raised in one day.

Weight of the wall sections, which are made of steel-reinforced concrete, is about 14 tons, with the largest section about 18 tons. To break the strong adhesive force, between the wall sections and floor, a paraffin-base application was first applied and metal wedges inserted around the edges.

Giant Crane Used

A giant crane from the Tru-Mix company was used in lifting the wall sections into place, which are held erect by temporary studding with bolt joints affixed to the wall and floor. When all the walls are erected, they are lined from corner to corner and concrete columns, called pilasters, poured to permanently join the separate sections.

Although this type of construction is limited to certain building types, its use results in a saving in labor and form costs, used in normal form pouring construction. Also, it provides a "perfectly smooth" wall surface when poured on the floor, which is ready for painting. Old form construction leaves wood impressions from the many boards used.

Construction began about six weeks ago by the Portland firm of Smith-Phillips. Warehouse completion is expected around Oct. 1, with packing house completion 21 days later.

Hot Water Heat

The packing house will be 150 feet by 240 feet with a concrete floor, featuring hot water heat in the floor. The walls will be mostly columns and open for a

height 12 feet above the floor. It is hoped that the open construction will allow good air circulation throughout the plant. No doors will be installed. A 40-foot concrete apron will be installed on the west end of the house, and 30-foot apron on the north end. The concrete columns and walls are being poured in forms by the old method.

The roof will consist of two 75-foot spans of the wooden truss-type, prefabricated at Portland. When completed, the building will house three washing units, with space provided for a fourth; automatic dumping machines and lift-trucks. Holmes stated that every labor-saving device known is being installed, and that the packing house would be "as near modern as we know how to make it." Fruit will enter the building from the west side and be processed to the east end and out across the yard to the

cold storage plant.

The 86 by 240-foot cold storage building will also be renovated in the future as a part of the three-year building program, Holmes said. The upper portion, which is presently not used for cold storage, will be joined with the bottom floor by tearing out the second floor, and lift trucks, utilizing the pallet method of storing fruit, will be used. In this method, the packed fruit boxes are placed on wooden platforms called pallets, which can be easily carried by lift trucks and also allow more air circulation among the boxes.

Bear Creek's present buildings will be used for extension of the offices and also additional storage, when the two new buildings are completed. The new warehouse building will be used for part of the gift box procedure, with Fruit-of-the-Month club and gift items to be stored in it.

George Eichnor Leaves Job As Editor of Unique Paper Published for Camp White

Camp White—The final issue of one of the most unique publications devoted to the interests of veterans in hospitals and homes throughout the country came from the press at the Camp White domiciliary this past week.

Dominews, the V.A. member paper published monthly in mimeograph form, may continue but it will no longer contain the satirical wisdom and comic flashes incorporated in its pages under the guiding genius of its dynamic editor George Eichnor.

Plans to Leave

Eichnor put the paper to bed last week with the definite announcement of his departure at the end of the month for the island of Manhattan. He has been prevailed upon by his son Lieut. Col. John T. Eichnor, stationed now at Governor's Island in New York harbor, to sever his connections here and move to the big city bag and baggage.

Col. Eichnor is with the first army having graduated last June from the staff and command school at Ft. Leavenworth, Kans. It has taken a considerable amount of determination on George's part to make the break from the editorship of Dominews. Under his direction the little camp monthly evolved from a stereotyped semi-news paper to a colorful departure in institutional journalism, attracting attention far beyond the confines of the Veterans Administration and veteran interests in the valley.

Enjoyed Work

"I am definitely leaving," he said. "And you can say for me that I appreciate the opportunity which was given to me to develop Dominews along the lines it has followed. I was given a free hand to write and print the kind of reading matter the men were interested in. No one cramped my style for a minute and that is why it gained so

much attention."

George Eichnor's achievement is especially noteworthy through the fact that he acquired a taste for literary pursuits and became publisher after a career as a mining engineer in South America and other remote places where the life is rugged and detached from such attributes of civilization as magazines. He wrote short stories about characters and situations he knew in his experiences which he illustrated and printed for the members. He also provided other features from his pen reflecting the humorous side of life at Camp White.

"This was all new experience for me and it simply shows that with an interest in the work and the need to learn, even a handicapped veteran can accomplish something," George observed. He hopes that other handicapped members recognize this fact above any other radiating from his influence in the post he held.

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Descendants of '53 Wagon Train Group Plan Celebration

By MARY LOU SKINNER

The descendants of the Preacher Wagon Train will gather Sunday, Sept. 20, at the Table Rock Estates to celebrate the 100th anniversary of their forebears' arrival in the Rogue valley and to honor Mrs. Elva Wheeler Persons, only known living grandchild of Stephen Taylor, member of the wagon train.

Mrs. Persons was born at Grants Pass in 1868 in a log cabin near what is now the airport. Her home was known to travelers as a "Stopper House" for they knew that they could get food and shelter there. It was often called in those days a "Two Bit House" for the charge was two bits for food, two bits for a bed and two bits for each horse. Money was scarce, however, and the menfolk would most often sleep in the hay. Her father was John Wheeler, a miner from Jacksonville.

How Roxy Ann Named

Grandfather Taylor took a donation land claim at the foot of Roxy Ann. In fact the well-known butte is named for his son's wife... Ann Prescott Taylor. She was young and lonely and would sit often on the side of the mountain dreaming. Neighbors began to call it Ann's mountain, and finally "Ann up on the rocks," and then shortly "Roxy Ann."

The Preacher Train was so called because there were six ministers and a Methodist exhorter in the company. Sixty wagons long, they entrained at Rockford, Illinois, on April 7, 1853 and arrived in the Rogue valley Oct. 27. They came via the Applegate Trail, bringing stock, household goods and especially feather beds. One feather bed was worth a yoke of oxen.

The call has gone out to all descendants of the train to "Catch on... catch on... catch on to Oregon" for this call was used after every stop on the long way across the continent. Rachel Taylor, 14-year-old daughter of Stephen Taylor kept a daily diary of the long journey and the names of George Eby, Lawrence Johnstone, Phil Blake, Will Sells, the Royals, Maria Ducker, the Burts, the Geiger boys, William Williams and of course the Taylors and the Hoffmans were woven into the fabric of the adventure.

Appropriate Setting

That the celebration is to take place at Table Rock Estates is singularly appropriate for the Table Rocks have been landmark and points in the history of this valley ever since John Turner, friend of Jedediah Smith, and mountain men provoked a full scale attack of Table Rock Indians in 1837. The two peace treaties with the Aroka Indians were signed at the base of the Table Rocks. And at one time Fort Lane was established on the hill across from the Rocks on what is now the road to the Table Rocks Estate. The Estates belong to John Day who was instrumental in marking the Applegate Trail and who is sponsoring a history of the Rogue River Valley now being published serially in the Sunday Mail Tribune.

All descendants of the Preacher Train are invited to contact Mrs. Neva Taylor Clifford at 1211 West Main st. Table Rock Estates has a large sign on Highway 99 north of Medford at Tolo. Old timers will remember it because it is where Stewart creek empties into the Rogue river and where the wagon trains could ford. New comers will know it as the road that crosses Gold Ray Dam.

Days and nights are of equal length throughout the world twice a year. This occurs at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, about March 21 and September 21, respectively, when the sun is directly overhead at the Equator.

Model Flight Becomes Science With Members of 'Prop Nuts'

Medford Hobbyists Holders of Four National Records

A visitor to the Agate desert last Sunday might have wondered what intense activity kept a lot of fellows' noses buried in the trunk of their cars.

Closer inspection would have revealed a veritable portable shop with complete repair facilities to keep aloft one of America's most popular hobbies, model airplane flying.

The local wing of this national hobby is called the Medford Prop Nuts. The unit is headed by Ed Gilkey, Central Point, president; Lloyd Miles, Medford, vice-president; and Tom Mast, Medford, secretary-treasurer.

Kit by Draft

Club members, which have dropped to a total of about 12 because of draft calls, include four national record holders. Gordon Ashby of Medford set the free-flight senior Class "A" record earlier this year; Lloyd Miles was first in the PAA-Load contest last June at Marysville, Calif., and received a watch from Pan-American Airways; Gilkey, 1/4A gas record; and Bob Ottomano, Class "C" record. Ottomano also won first place in Class "C" free flight at the national contest at Dallas, Tex. in 1951. Several of the records will continue to stand for the contest as new rules have changed the times allowed aloft for planes.

Very strict rules have been evolved for flying over the years and accredited contests for records must be sanctioned by the Academy of Model Aeronautics. Three age groups are set up, with up to 12 years the junior division; 12 to 16 the senior and over 16 the open classification.

Several Types

There are several types of flights used. Various sections of free-flight are held, with altitude and floating the construction ends that owners attempt to obtain when building. Ships gain altitude by use of small engines, either hand-launched or off the ground, which cut out by use of a timer after 15 or 20 seconds; also "pull" powered by Jetex—a powder solid, which is ignited by a fuse and provides rocket-type propulsion from 15 to 18 seconds. The latter came from England. Jet motors are also used when high speed is desired, but this type of flying is not common in this area.

Control line is also a popular means of maneuvering a model plane, although southern Oregon with plenty of space has concentrated more on free flight. Use of a control line with jet motor has effected a speed of 180 miles an hour, using a 70-foot line from owner to plane, according to Ed Sims, proprietor of a local cycle and hobby shop.

Radio-Controlled Planes

Besides free-flight, local hobbyists have concentrated on the more complicated method of radio-controlled flight. This type of flying was extremely difficult in early days as the operator had to be well-versed in electricity. The whole operation was "revolutionized," according to Sims, with the invention of the "glow" plug and fuel. This eliminated heavy plane equipment such as a coil, condensers, switch, batteries and rack and set of breaker points. The spark from the latter also interfered with the radio contact.

With this elimination of wiring headaches, it was possible for the non-electric man to join in the radio-controlled field. The glow plug consists of a small unit with a platinum-coated filament. The heat of the previous firing keeps it hot. The fuel contains wood alcohol, castor oil and nitro-methane.

Practice Needed

Bob Ottomano, a "radio" model



RADIO CONTROLLED—Pictured is Bob Ottomano, member of Medford Prop Nuts club, with his radio-controlled model plane, "Bootsprings," with which he took second place last Sunday in the annual free-flight and radio control contest at Agate desert, near Camp White. When launching the ship, Ottomano runs as pictured above with the plane in one hand and radio control unit in the other. The unit directs the plane in direction and motor speed by pressing a button on the side which regulates the plane's own unit.

pilot, states that radio equipment can be assembled for \$65 for a "good" outfit and about \$130 for the best. This plus a plane-building cost of from \$15 to \$20 makes the initial expense to begin radio-controlled flight.

Sims noted that before a "prop nut" begins radio flight, he should build many free-flight planes to completely understand the principles involved. The amount of money tied up makes it necessary to do this, he added.

Radio flight is real "push-button" flying. Ottomano pointed out, with the plane's actions controlled by pushing a button on the ground unit. One "push" will turn the ship to the right, two to the left and three will change the motor's speed from high to low. Three presses with a long hold following will kill the motor.

Aloft 15 Minutes

Depending on fuel, the plane can stay aloft from 9 to 15 minutes, with eight minutes being the regulation contest time. Motor sizes go from the smallest of one-fifth or one-third horsepower to a full 1 horsepower. The smallest maximum displacement is about .05 of a cubic inch, while the largest is .65 of a cubic inch.

The term "Spanish Main" originally referred to the Spanish colonies on the northeast coast of South America to distinguish them from island possessions. In later usage it was generally applied to the Caribbean Sea and nearby waters made hazardous by pirates and buccaners.

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