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A STATION ON MID-DESERT.

"Uncle Jimmy" Johnson's Place Convenient for Traveling Lake County Stock Raisers.

(PAUL DE LANEY IN PORTLAND JOURNAL.)

Alkali is a stockman's station in mid-desert in Lake County. It is about 72 miles from Lakeview and 40 miles from Paisley. The nearest point to other water is at the head of Abert Lake to the south and about 25 miles. Alkali is the last stopping point where there is water on the route from civilization to the desert. It is in the center of a great alkali bed, the plains for many miles around being covered with the white substance, giving it the appearance from a distance of great snow beds. Here in the center of this waste a mammoth spring boils forth, sending out a stream of pure water which is soon absorbed by the alkali and dry sands.

THE HOST AND HIS STATION.

James Johnson, a white-haired old man known throughout the country as "Uncle Jimmie," keeps the station at Alkali. The station consists of a 2-room shack, a few haystacks and a watering place for horses. It was established exclusively for stockmen, mostly sheepmen, the only persons who ever venture that way, save an occasional trapper. "Uncle Jimmie" remains at this station year in and year out, though there are times that he does not see a human being for weeks. In the fall and spring it is lively at Alkali, but in the winter travel is scarce, and in mid-summer a visitor is a novelty to the old man. The sheepmen go to the desert early in the fall to take advantage of the winter range. At this season of the year the snow falls and melts, producing a growth of short grass suitable for sheep food. All through the winter the sheep thrive on this grass and eat snow in the adjoining mountains and foothills for water. By the time spring opens the grass is all gone and the sheepmen drive their flocks from the desert before the scorching sun kills everything in the way of vegetation and dries away the snow and water. As these sheepmen come and go Uncle Jimmie has his hands full entertaining them. He knows every man from one end of the desert to the other, and all speak well of Uncle Jimmie.

BUREAU OF INFORMATION.

The old man just suits the place. He remembers everything he hears, is a fairly good cook, always good natured and makes his guests feel at home. His biscuits may be a little yellow with soda, his bacon may be fried a little too brown, his coffee may be a little too black, for his condensed milk gives out occasionally, but Uncle Jimmie makes up for these defects in some way. He will surprise his guests with fried duck for supper occasionally, or give them boiled eggs for breakfast or make rice pudding. It might not look tempting to the rugged stockmen at home, but after months of camping out and eating their own cooking one of Uncle Jimmie's meals is considered a treat from many points of view.

Then he knows the news. He is a gossip by nature. He remembers everything each guest says, it matters not how many of them there be at one time, and he tells the next guest what the former guests did and said. If one man brings in news

from civilization about the wars and politics and social events of the kind that interests these people, Uncle Jimmie repeats it all to future guests until he gets something better. Then occasionally someone leaves a newspaper with Uncle Jimmie. This he reads over so many times during his life days that he gets it committed to memory and if it chances to be worn out when the next guests come, he tells them what was in it.

HAS MANY DIVERSIONS.

The old man finds many diversions during the long periods of loneliness. He has his dogs, his cats, chickens, ducks and geese and he is surrounded by coyotes. While the bounty law was on he made some extra money trapping these animals. He gets an occasional wildcat and sells its hide. The outside of his shack is covered with hides and all kinds of ugly traps. He has two or three old guns, but he is a dead shot with them. He hunts for geese and ducks and goes fishing occasionally.

How Uncle Jimmie catches fish and kills ducks and geese out on the desert is a mystery to the stranger, but Uncle Jimmie soon convinces one that he does it. The spring boils forth from a crater-like opening in the ground. The hole is 20 or 30 feet across and of unknown depth. Uncle Jimmie has thrown up a circular embankment around the spring which gives it the appearance of the inside of a circus ring, except that it is full of water to the top. A ditch cut through this dam enables the old man to irrigate a small garden spot and his pond around the spring has been planted with fish. He has constructed a walk out over the pond to the spring and he walks out to the spring and fishes in the deep water where he has no trouble in landing a mess of beauties for favored guests. The man with the small bottle usually receives these special foods.

A remarkable thing about this spring is that it apparently has no bottom. Hundreds of feet of cord have been let down into it with a weight attached, and none has yet been found long enough to reach the bottom.

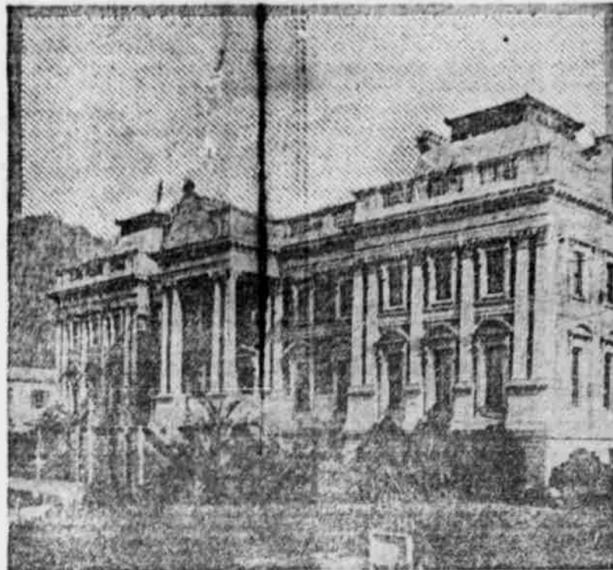
HOW HE HUNTS.

And the duck hunting is just as simple as fishing. Uncle Jimmie has only to close up his house and hide inside and keep still for a day or two and the wild ducks will come to his pond and attempt to catch his fish. He waits until a large number of them light on the water and then he turns loose one of his old-fashioned guns, and he never fails to do execution. He never gets but one shot but he makes it count.

DOMESTICATED GESE.

The host at Alkali has a large flock of wild geese, which have become perfectly domesticated. He found the nest of a wild goose down among the flags in the alkali pond and watched it from day to day. When the old goose began "setting," Uncle Jimmie "scipied" her eggs and placed them under one of his common hens. They all hatched out, took to their hen-mother handsomely, have continued to breed and now he has a large flock. They swim upon the circular pond in his yard and never think of leaving. They are as gentle as the most common domesticated geese.

Then he has his funny episodes to help kill the time. He started in with a pair of cats and soon had a dozen more. He was too tender-hearted to kill any of them and there



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, CAPE TOWN.

For weeks South Africa has been looking forward to the arrival at Cape Town of the British colonial secretary, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. A rousing reception has been planned, the chief feature of which is to be an official welcome to Mr. Chamberlain at the house of assembly, where the Cape Colony parliament meets.

were no neighbors with whom to share them. Coyotes and wild cats are death on Louse cats but the cats never strayed far from the house and but few were lost in this manner. The cats were taking the place. Whenever he left the kitchen door open the cats ransacked the cupboard and table in search of food. There was nothing else for them to eat near the place, and animal instinct warned them against straying out into the desert where the coyotes were watching for them.

FOUND A REMEDY.

The old man found, by accident, a way of keeping the cats out of the kitchen, but it worked successfully and permanently. In whiling away the time he decided to make some ornaments for his "parlor" and started in by stuffing a coyote's skin. When he had sewed together and stuffed it he found that he had no head for it, as the scalp had been taken. Not to be outdone, he cut the purred part from a wild cat's skin, sewed it to the coyote skin and stuffed it accordingly, placing glass marbles of different colors in the openings for eyes. Stuffed and placed erect on a board the animal was a ragged looking one as well as a novel one. It did not look well enough to place in the parlor, so the old man stood it in the kitchen. The cats were under the floor, watching for an opportunity to enter. By accident the old man left the kitchen door open while he went for a bucket of water. The cats all entered in a body, and in a moment he heard a noise that startled him. He rushed back and found the cats clinging to the walls and ceiling and mewling in a most pitiful manner, at the same time gazing at his stuffed animal. They had torn the table cloth and the cloth from the cupboard in their attempted flight.

THE CATS SCATTERED.

The old man was dumfounded. He thought they had all gone mad on the spot. He attempted to drive them out and in doing so broke the only window pane in the room. This was all they needed. They made a grand rush for the opening and they poured through it like rain until the

last cat had escaped. Two or three days afterward they approached the place cautiously, the old cat in the lead. She reared up on the stoop and looked in. There stood the fake animal. It was sufficient. She ran for life. The others followed. Uncle Jimmie was not troubled further with his cats in the kitchen. A combination of two of their most destructive enemies was too much for them.

For months after this episode the old man entertained his guests by telling the story and demonstrating the truth of it by taking the animal in his hands and chasing the cats from one point to another about the place.

In his isolation the host at Alkali does not find life so burdensome after all.

Taxes Collected.

The total amount of taxes collected by Sheriff Dunlap up to Monday evening, March 16th, amounts to more than three-fourths of the total tax for 1902. The amount is considerably more than was paid in last year.

Total amount on the 1902 tax roll was.....	\$44245 19
Assessments made by the Sheriff.....	63 54
	\$44308 73
Total amount collected up to and including March 16 1903.....	32881 12
Amount of Rebate allowed..	1011 93
	\$33893 05
Amount apportioned to the School fund.....	6119 98
Amount apportioned to the Road fund.....	1154 58
Amount of special School tax in District, No. 7.....	71 58
Amount of special school tax in District, No. 11.....	148 42
Amount of special school tax in District, No. 21.....	283 81
	\$ 7778 36
State tax \$8230.00, one half to be paid on or before May, leaving a balance, to be applied on redemption of warrants.....	\$2087.76
Total amount yet to be collected.....	10415 68

GREEDY MULTNOMAH

A Few Straight Hits by Our Popular Representative -- State Should be Reapportioned

KENO, Oreg., Mar. 8th, 1903.
A. Y. BEACH
Lakeview, Or.

Dear Sir and Friend:

I notice in the Examiner (your paper) about Portland getting everything they ask for except the U. S. Senator. Your remarks are well taken, only hardly strong enough to do real justice.

The State, and particularly Eastern Oregon, will never get any beneficial legislation they need until such time as they can combine against Multnomah and Marion counties. People from afar do not notice this as the members of the Legislature do, being on the ground.

Jackson County with a normal school—Douglas with a normal school and soldiers home, Lane with the state university, Benton with the agricultural college, and Polk with a normal school; then Marion with the insane asylum, the penitentiary, the reform school, blind school, deaf mute school, expense of state house, etc. All these must cater to Portland to get what each of them want, and if any other County wants any State assistance they must invade this combination or go without, no matter how small the assistance ask for may be. All the gentlemen from these counties assume to be the "watch dog" of the treasury when any other county knocks for admission. We remember that Multnomah has \$48,000,000 taxable property, Eastern Oregon \$33,000,000, and the remainder of Western Oregon only \$59,000,000. You will therefore take notice that Eastern Oregon comprises more than 2/3 of the whole States area and pays more than half as much taxes than all the rest of the state outside of Multnomah County. We simply good naturedly poor our shekels into the hands of the taxpayers for the benefit of these people, and get nothing. If things are not changed on this line, the people of Eastern Oregon will be justified in clamoring for a division of Oregon, the geographical line of which will be on the Summit of the Cascade mountains.

Again you will observe by examining the matter, that Eastern Oregon is not properly represented in the Legislature. Multnomah county has 20 members, Western Oregon 50 members, while Eastern Oregon has only 20 members. Every member from Eastern Oregon represents 1 1/2 million dollars taxable property, while the rest of the State including Multnomah county, where millionaires are as thick as mosquitoes in the month of June, each member represents only a shade over a million and one half, and the remainder of Western Oregon, exclusive of Multnomah county, each member only represents one and one fifth million. We know the representation is not based on the taxable property, but should hear no more about the "poor" people of Eastern Oregon.

After the census of 1905, the Legislature should, and doubtless will enact a general apportionment law based upon population, which will enable Eastern Oregon to demand a better recognition. Mark you that within the next ten years Eastern

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