

# Salute to Merrill, Founded 1894, Busy, Bustling Community Today

By BILL JENKINS

Klamath Falls salutes Merrill, hub of the potato producing land in the Klamath basin and busy spud and grain processing center.

From its beginnings in 1894 until the present day, Merrill has had a long history of agricultural growth and progress, and a colorful background of wide-open days, new crops, the cattle industry and a plague of fires that more than once threatened the town.

Since 1894

Merrill sprang into being in 1894 when B. E. Martin built the first grist mill there to process the wheat crop. At that time the nearest town was a tiny village called Gale, located some two miles or so to the northeast of the present site of Merrill.

Gale consisted mainly of a blacksmith shop, a store and a post office operated by a man named O'Farrell. When the grist mill was built at the Merrill site he moved his operations, stock and barrels to that location. The old store building from a Gale office in Merrill and then to other uses until today when it is part of the Victory lounge.

Grows Up

By 1903 the town had grown to sizeable proportions for that time and was looked on as a pretty wide-open spot. The first meeting of the town trustees was held in that year with George W. Offield acting as president and S. E. Martin as recorder. The townsite had been surveyed in 1894 and laid out on ground donated by Nathan Merrill. To the Merrill tract were added the Terwilliger and Rhodes tracts to make the town up to its present size.

The city was incorporated in 1908 and George Offield served as the first mayor of the new city.

In these early days Merrill was mainly interested in the growing of various grains and alfalfa and clover. Cattle ranches ran on a huge scale and cattle were wintered in the area rather than being moved out during the stormy period. Spuds, one of the mainstays of the country now, were not grown in any numbers till the 20's. Some people believed that potatoes would not grow in irrigated land. Others weren't interested. What tubers were raised clung to the steep, rocky hillsides rather than flourishing on the rich loam flats.

Access to Merrill from Klamath Falls was gained by the old hill road which followed the base of Stukel mountain and then entered Merrill from the north. Getting a doctor from Klamath to Merrill, for instance, took a matter of some six hours. Before the phones came in 1906 it was the custom in emergencies to ride for aid. One of the Kukul boys had a particularly fine horse and many times someone would ride that far, relay the message and the youth would race into town to fetch the doctor.

Irrigation

Irrigation on a large scale was started in the area in the '90's when J. Frank Adams and Dan and Clint Van Brimmer opened up the cut from White Lake to bring water to the fields.

Electricity came to Merrill in 1911. That year also marked the first of the major fires that were to plague the city for the next 10 years. A livery stable, a store building and a residence owned by the Martin brothers and R. H. Anderson went up in flames on April 1 of that year, killing 13 head of good horses in the barn. The building was then located at the site of the Old Safety store building.

R. H. Anderson was again the victim of a fire in 1915 when a

blaze wiped out a store and butcher shop he had built on the opposite side of the street from his first store.

Big Blaze

Then followed a period of five years in which there is no record of a major fire, only to be followed in 1920 by a blaze that claimed the old opera house and part of the block on which it was located, including a tavern on the corner where the Shell station is now situated.

That fire occurred in May on the night of graduation exercises for the grade school. Faulty wiring was blamed for the blaze, which broke out shortly after the crowd had left the building. In 1921 the last of the big fires broke out and claimed the city hall, library and other civic offices as well as several store buildings which were located on the main street.

The present highway leading through Merrill was completed in 1922 to replace the hill road which had been in use until that time.

Busy, Bustling

Merrill today is a busy, bustling town filled with grain and spud trucks and with the towers of the flour mills and spud plants jutting up along the Great Northern tracks on the north edge of town. Modern stores serve the needs of the citizens. In addition to their potatoes the country raises great quantities of grains, alfalfa and other crops. This year there were between 500 and 1000 acres of onions raised and a few sugar beets are grown in the area.

That it is a prosperous and far

## WHY WE SAY

By Lloyd J. Stevens



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It Pays to Use the Want-Ads!

## Trade Associations Have Big Hand in Way We Live

By SAM DAWSON

NEW YORK (AP)—There's a group of men meeting down in West Virginia today who have a greater influence on your daily lives than you may suspect—on the goods you buy, the prices you pay, the laws you are governed by, and, sometimes, on the conditions under which you work.

They are the executives of 1164 trade associations. The members of their various associations range all the way from grocers to giant industrial corporations. Trade associations are, or should be, groups of natural competitors seeking to better their own industry—without letting competition, or harming the public interests.

These men meet today in White Sulphur Springs, for the 30th annual gathering of the American Trade Association executives, are busy studying the climate—the climate of business.

Their president, T. E. Velfort, manager of the Copper and Brass Research Association, New York, tells them:

"Trade associations must be quick to sense changes in the climate in which business must be done. The business weather has been stormy and changeable and presents a challenge to trade associations which is obvious and indisputable."

The climate to which Velfort alludes is not only the business slump but also the attitude toward business by the government, labor and the public. And a growing interest since the war in examining the functions and operations of trade associations themselves.

Trade associations have grown rapidly. They have been widely acclaimed, not only for their work in the last two years, but also for the peace time some of them do in jobs of improving business conditions and policing the practices of their own members. In 1900 there

were about 100 national and interstate trade associations.

Now the department of commerce lists 1400 national and interstate groups as trade, professional and service associations, with a membership totalling two million firms.

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And why, the shrewd shoppers asked, take anything less than this straight-eight thriller when it wears a price tag

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