

# Meiss Lake Ranch History Rings Deep in Pioneering

(Editor's Note—The giant Meiss Lake Ranch in Butte Valley was sold Aug. 14, by J. C. Stevenson and family to Dallas oil man Frank Hofers. The sale price was reported to be well over a million dollars. Mrs. James (Bud) Stevenson, the Herald and News correspondent in Madocel and a member of the family, has written up the history of the famed ranch which has the reputation for being one of the largest individually owned and operated ranching concerns in the Northwest.)

By MARGARET STEVENSON

In 1872 the Meiss Ranch was established by Dolen, Moore and Fairchild when Dolen and Fairchild established the first camp on the present Roy Andrus home site. This brand was known as the "Circle 6" and the camp name was derived from the brand. Dolen entered into the partnership with Laff Moore later, his reason being that Moore was giving trouble and Moore wanted the protection of the friendship that Dolen had already established with the Indians.

After the partnership was formed by the three men, Dolen returned to the state of Maine and married Sarah Ellen Smith, Mrs. Dolen was an aunt of Waido Smith, the present clerk of Siskiyou County and Wendell Smith who is a teacher in the Klamath Union High School.

The Dolen built a log house across from the present ranch house in 1872 soon after they returned from the east. During the time they lived on the Meiss Ranch there was born to them, William, named for William Turner who resided on what is now a part of the Meiss Ranch; Dan, who now is a retired postmaster of Keno, Ore.; Zena, who later was married to Lee, who died at Merrill, Ore.; Rebecca; Nellie, named for her grandmother Dolen; Ruth; and the last child Orinda named for grandmother Smith. Orinda died at age 10 on the ranch and was buried at Yreka.

These ranchers pioneered in the raising of grain. It was thrashed by spreading it on the floor of the barn and running the horses over it. The straw was pitched out and the remaining chaff and grain was run through a chaff mill which was operated by a crank with manual labor.

The ranch became famous in history during the Modoc War, where the Meiss Ranch was the site of the Fairchild headquarters.

The old spring at the present ranch site was a favorite camping place for the Indians. Chief Schonchin visited him and slept in front of the fireplace of the log cabin that finally burned prior to the spring of 1874 when Dan Dolen was born and brought to the present Meiss Ranch house as a baby. During the time they lived on the Meiss Ranch, Dolen broke his leg and had to set it himself and as a result always had a slight lameness. In later years Dolen was in Klamath Falls and contacted

Dolen was particularly friendly with the Indians and was often visited by Chief Schonchin. Prior to Dolen's marriage Chief Schonchin visited him and slept in front of the fireplace of the log cabin that finally burned prior to the spring of 1874 when Dan Dolen was born and brought to the present Meiss Ranch house as a baby. During the time they lived on the Meiss Ranch, Dolen broke his leg and had to set it himself and as a result always had a slight lameness. In later years Dolen was in Klamath Falls and contacted

## Cheney Heads Soil, Waters Department

OREGON STATE COLLEGE — The responsibility for the future development of a sound soil and water use program for Oregon passed to an Iowa State college expert on soils and crops recently with the appointment of Dr. Horace B. Cheney as new head of the soils department at Oregon State college.

Another major appointment was that of Wilbur T. Cooney, associate professor of poultry husbandry at OSC, as assistant dean of agriculture.

The new head of the soils department has worked on soils research and served as chairman of the soils and crops extension group at Iowa State since 1942. In his work, Dr. Cheney has helped to direct and develop an Iowa soils testing program similar to the one being established for Oregon at the present time by OSC. He succeeds Dr. W. L. Powers, who retired this summer after 43 years service.

As assistant dean, Cooney will direct all resident teaching in the school of agriculture. A product of the Roseburg schools and OSC, he has been on the college staff since 1937. His appointment fills the vacancy created in 1950 when F. E. Price was raised from that position to dean and director.

Schonchin who was then blind. Schonchin recognized him by his lame walk.

The Indians dug spaws with sharp oak sticks cutting them for hay along with meadow hay to sustain their horses. This was wonderful feed giving the horses gloss and making them fat. The spaws were equal to any feed grain of today. The squaws cleaned spaws by placing them in a basket and running water over them through the basket. They were ground with mortise and pestles and made into a gruel and cooked by dropping on hot cooking stones.

The partnership of the three men was dissolved in 1882 and sold to Louis Meiss. The Meiss ranch was operated by two sons, Hank and Henry Meiss. Hank, the eldest, was here first. He married Belle Deeter of Sams Neck. Henry Meiss came to operate the ranch after Hank went to Montana to live. They stayed until the time of Mrs. Meiss' death and then moved to Sacramento. Fountain Meiss, son of the Henry Meiss visited the ranch in 1947 as did also a son and a daughter of another brother, Ben Meiss. All three reside in Sacramento. Ed Twilliger then leased the ranch for pasture grazing. After Twilliger's lease expired it was leased to Corpening & Donovan.

In 1940, E. M. Bubb, A. W. Macken, E. R. and Murel A. Long acquired this property and started development of the ranch, building a low dike and digging drain ditches. They reconitioned and modernized the old house and built the huge shop on the main ranch proper. During this time a deal was instigated to buy land from the Butte Valley Irrigation District.

In 1943, the Long's disposed of their equity to Bubb and Macken. In 1944, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Stevenson, pioneers of the Klamath Basin, purchased the Meiss Ranch, coming from Tulelake homesteads to live and bringing with them their daughter, Junia. In 1945, they were joined by their son, James (Bud), and Harold and their families. In 1946, the J. H. Noakes family came to the ranch, Mrs. Noakes being a Stevenson daughter. In 1949, Larry Wray, son of their older daughter and Mr. R. L. Wray of Oakland, Calif., made his home prior to enlisting in the Navy.

In 1944, they repaired and

## Turkeys Go To Market Everyday Now

Any day now might end the life of the turkey nowadays, says Noel Bennion, extension poultry specialist at Oregon State college. Time was, he explains, when Mr. Turkey could expect to live until sometime near Thanksgiving. Now all that has been changed. Turkeys now are being butchered in every month of the year.

In fact, Oregon turkey growers, the national turkey industry, and the food distributors of America have set aside August 14 to 23 as "Midsummer Turkey Time."

Chief reason for the new year-round slaughtering schedule is the recent development of the quick-maturing, small roaster-fryer, says Bennion. This is a meaty, four to nine pound bird that is ready for market 14 or 16 weeks after it has hatched, compared with the larger birds which took six months or more to mature in the good old days.

Another reason is that even the largest turkeys of today — those weighing from 15 to 25 pounds — now start to market in June or July. By August, the supply of fresh-killed big turkeys is enough to give the whole nation a mid-summer turkey feast.

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strengthened the dike. The first irrigation well was drilled, which turned out to be artesian. The ranch now has three artesian wells. These are the only artesian wells in Butte Valley. From that time on various developments and extensive improvements were made. At the time that the ranch was purchased the old Meiss Lake bed was flooded and the water was back of the ranch house and barn. There was only 600 acres of grain planted around the edge of the lakebed and tules were so high that a man on a horse 15 hands high could not be seen while riding through them. The muskrats were thick enough for Bud and Harold to run a trap line. Improvements to the house were also made, developing it from a crude ranch home into a modern, comfortable, attractive home.

In 1947, 1,100 acres of land was added in the lakebed. This was purchased from Mr. and Mrs. John Liskey of Merrill. The transaction started by Bubb and Macken with the Butte Valley Irrigation District was completed at this time and an additional 80 acres of state land was purchased making a total of 13,161 acres in the ranch.

The tules were burned and the land was plowed and worked 12 times in preparation for the planting of grain. There was no electricity and only two pumps being operated by gas motors. In July of 1945, power was made available which permitted the great advancement in the development of the ranch. The extension of the powerline to the Meiss Ranch also benefited other residents of the Madocel area. In November of 1951 telephone service was extended by Sams Neck Mutual Telephone Co. through the Durris exchange.

At the present time 4000 acres of land are planted to grain, 1000 acres of natural meadow, 1000 acres of cultivated lands including alfalfa, clover and potatoes. The remaining land is used for sump purposes for the waters of Meiss Lake and grazing. Intentions for the future is to have the lake shore all in tame grasses. In addition to the two pumps which have been converted to electricity, there are four pumps used for irrigation or drainage and seven wells for irrigation with power lines extended over a great portion of the ranch.

Irrigation and drainage have been under constant development as well as the operation of the cattle. A herd of purebred hereford has been built up as well as a commercial herd. In addition to the purebred herds, there are several herds of Hereford, Angus and other breeds.

In 1949, a man made lake used as a reservoir was built on Forest Service land on Bull Mountain, at the head of Musgrave Creek. The body of water is now known as Lake Juanita for Mrs. Stevenson. This water is used to irrigate the meadow.

The Meiss Ranch is now well developed but will take several years to complete work that has been started. Frank Hofers of Dallas, Texas, its new owner, is already making plans for further development. He has varied successful business interests.

At the present time the Meiss Ranch has the reputation of being the largest individually owned and operated ranch in the Northwest.

The sale price is in excess of a million dollars. The Stevenson's plans are indefinite. In a statement to the press the entire Stevenson family wish to say that they have enjoyed living in Butte Valley. The work and development of the ranch has been very pleasurable and they hope that progress and prosperity will be enjoyed in the future and they will not lose the many friends they have made.



SPORTING A PAIR OF TROPHIES coveted by 4-H clubs throughout Klamath County and Oregon are these members of the Bonanza Beef Club and their leader, John Heyden (center). Left to right, they are Rex Porterfield; Carol Challis, Catherine Dearborn, Joe Hoefler, Billy Dearborn, and Jim Porterfield. Catherine is holding the Rotary Sweepstakes won by the club last year, while young Hoefler holds the trophy won by Vernon Haley (not pictured) at the Oregon State Fair for championship showmanship.

Herald and News

# FARM NEWS

MALCOLM EPLEY, Jr.  
Farm Editor

## Controversial Farm Report May Be Revealed This Week

By OVID A. MARTIN

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of Agriculture Brannan may make public late this week the summarized results of a nation-wide survey showing overwhelming farmer endorsement of federal farm aid programs.

The survey was made a year ago and was subjected to sharp criticism by some farm organizations and Republicans. A department committee has just completed work summarizing about 3,000 reports of the survey submitted by county and state groups.

A summary of the survey, because of the timing of its prospective release to the public and its nature, may set up a controversial Brannan Farm Plan as a presidential election campaign target of the Republicans.

The summary will first be submitted to a closed meeting Friday of an advisory committee of representatives of non-government organizations, including farm, education, religious and social groups. If this committee is satisfied with the document, it will probably be made public.

The survey, which Brannan called the "family farm policy review," was designed, he said, to find out what farmers thought of present farm programs and to get producer recommendations for possible improvements.

The survey was conducted by the department's own field agencies, including farmer committees who help administer the farm aid programs. Officials have stated, while withholding reports on the survey, that most farmers approve federal crop control, price supports and other such programs.

The survey drew particularly bitter attacks from President Allan B. Kline of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Kline said the department was stepping outside its proper administrative field to organize and inspire "pressure" on Congress for possible new farm legislation.

**Gilchrist Man Honored At OSC**

OREGON STATE COLLEGE — George R. Hobbs, now a teacher in Gilchrist, is one of eleven Oregon State college summer session students initiated into Epsilon Pi Tau, national professional honorary for men in industrial arts.

Membership in Epsilon Pi Tau is limited to 25 per cent of upper division enrollment. National meetings are held to discuss teaching problems.

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## Wayne Morse To Campaign

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Wayne Morse of Oregon, tagging himself as a "liberal Republican," announced Tuesday he will campaign for Dwight D. Eisenhower as President.

"It is unimportant that I disagree with you on certain specific issues," Morse wrote Eisenhower in a letter made public by his office here, "because as to those issues, only time will tell what is the correct solution."

Morse dictated his letter to Eisenhower from London, Eng., after receiving a letter from the Republican nominee.

Morse and Sen. Russell Long (D-La.), are making an inspection tour of U.S. air bases overseas for the Senate Armed Services Committee.

## 5th Poultry Meet at OSC

Oregon State college will play host Oct. 10 and 11 to the 5th annual round table of the Pacific Northwest Chicken and Turkey Breeders, according to J. A. Harper of the OSC poultry department who is chairman for this year's program.

Of special interest to commercial chicken and turkey breeders, the program will feature Dr. Lewis W. Taylor, professor of poultry husbandry at the University of California, as guest speaker. Chicken and turkey breeders and specialists from Idaho, British Columbia, Washington and Oregon will attend.

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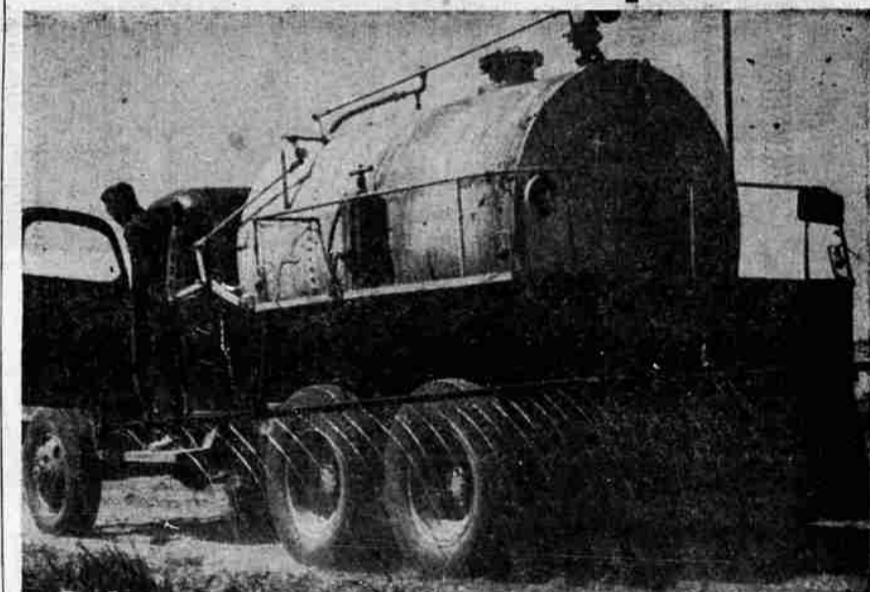
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