

Ex-Governor Tells Story Of Early Klamath Incident

Editor's Note—Following is a story that Oswald West wrote in 1905, and recently discovered. He sent it to the Herald and News to be used as an item from early day Klamath Falls history.

By OSWALD WEST

On July 5, 1905, the year of the Lewis and Clark Exposition, I found myself in Klamath Falls on business connected with the State Land Office. While taking an after dinner stroll along the town's main street, I was to witness what, to me, was a distressing performance.

A couple of cowhands, from down around Merrill, and well liquored-up, were exhibiting an undersized, half broken, foot-sore team of mules, which they had hitched to a heavy mountain-type top buggy. They would race them up and down the street to demonstrate how quickly they could be stopped in front of a saloon where drinks would be ordered.

Seeing that the abused animals needed a friend, I made inquiries as to whether they were for sale. Being told that the outfit was for sale for \$150, I informed the gentleman that I was not interested in the buggy and harness, only the mules. The deal, therefore, appeared to be off.

Along about 1 o'clock in the morning, I was awakened by a loud knock at my hotel room door. When I inquired as to what was asked: "Are you the guy who wanted to buy our mules?" I said I was. Said he: "We'll take \$135 for the outfit." Said I: "I wouldn't accept your buggy and harness as a gift. I am interested only in the mules." "Well," said he, "we'll take \$100 for them." Said I: "That's too much, I'll give you \$75." "If," said he, "you'll give us \$90, we'll sell — providing you'll advance us \$10" (badly needed whiskey money). "O.K.," said I.

Crawling out of bed, I dug up the 10 spot and passed it out to him, arranging for delivery of the mules at a feed yard in the morning, when the balance of the purchase price was to be paid.

The problem now to be solved was: how to get them to Ashland, from where they could be shipped by rail to Salem. Luck, however, was with me, for that very morning a steamer service was being inaugurated on Klamath Lake. A small freight and passenger boat was due to leave the Falls for Pelican Lodge — from where the old "Dead Indian" trail lead through and over the Cascades to Ashland, a distance of around 50 miles. So, I loaded my charges aboard the steamer and we reached our destination without mishap.

Unfortunately, however, the mules had not been broken to ride and had to be led over the trail. This necessitated my hiring a saddle nag; but the only one available was somewhat advanced in years, stiff in the shoulders and unshod. An old hornless stock saddle supplied was quite in keeping with the horse, which was to be turned loose as Ashland was neared, that he might return home.

When within about 15 miles of Ashland the old saddle nag became foot-sore and weary. So, I removed his bridle, which left him free to graze, and headed him back towards Pelican Bay. Covering the balance of the distance on foot, I reached Ashland around 9 o'clock at night.

The next morning I inquired as to shipping charges, and found that the lowest freight rate to Salem



ONE OF THE MULES involved in this story of an incident in the life of Klamath Falls in 1905 is shown here. Preparing to hit the saddle is Oswald West, now residing in Salem. West purchased the mules in Klamath Falls in 1905 and had them shipped to Salem. This picture was taken 53 years ago.

was \$70. While trying to decide whether to pay this high cost or make someone a present of the mules, I recalled that, when coming South, I had seen a crated calf resting on a Wells Fargo truck at Roseburg. So, I called on the local express agent, who informed me that the maximum weight acceptable for a crated animal was 700 pounds. And, if within that maximum, the two animals could be shipped to Salem for \$42.50 — some saving.

The mules weighed around 500 pounds each. So, with crates built to weigh within 200 pounds, they could travel by express. Inquiring at the livery stable who, in town, could and would make such crates, I was informed that an undertaker, whose establishment was located just across the street, had on occasions rendered such a service. Calling on the undertaker, a deal was made — the crates to be constructed of light, dry lumber so as to bring each within 200 pounds.

The undertaker: turned out to be a humane person, but without much knowledge as to mules, their character and disposition. Not wishing to see the little animals suffer any discomfort in transit, he left an opening in front through which they could stick their heads and stretch their necks. This led to disaster.

The job finished, the mules, blindfolded, were shoved into the crates and, as thought, made secure. As train time was approaching, the crates were loaded aboard an old-style low two-horse truck. When the vehicle was started on its way, the blindfolds were removed. The mules, however, true to their nature — cautious and curious — looked things over but raised no disturbance.

Upon reaching the S.P. station, I made delivery to the local express agent and received the company's receipt. The crates and contents were now shifted from the horse-truck to the express company's platform truck. Due to the Lewis and Clark fair, the train was running in two sections and took time out at Ashland in order to give the passengers an opportunity to have lunch in the station dining room.

Up to this time, the mules — not being sure of themselves — were well behaved, but it proved only a lull before a storm. As I recall, the express hand truck

was about a foot lower than the floor of the express car. This necessitated the agent in charge calling for needed assistance. The rear of the mules were towards the car door — their heads faced the ticket office entrance.

As the rear of the first crate was lifted the mule slid forward and, with head and neck extending through the crate's front opening, was thus given all needed freedom for action. Then it happened. In a split part of a second, the rear of the crate was kicked to splinters, these and the express agent disappearing through the rear door. The crate seemed to rise in the air and then crash on the platform. The mule, somehow, landed under the car. Sitting on a rail, he peered out at an amused audience.

The second mule, taking the cue from his mate, proceeded to kick himself free from his crate, which landed jumbled in the ticket office entrance. The two mules, once more free and together, proceeded to wend their way uphill toward the city center — followed by a flock of town youngsters. I boarded the train with the express company's receipt safely cached away in my wallet.

The Wells Fargo express agent at Salem was old Tom Reynolds, a faithful, long-time employe who believed and contended that his company was the most efficient concern on earth and could do no wrong. My train arrived at night or early morning. So, for devilment, I dropped in at the express company's office about 9 a.m. and said: "Uncle Tom, I've come for my mules." Said Tom: "What are you talking about? There are no mules here for you or anyone else." "Well, they were shipped yesterday from Ashland, on the same train that I came on."

Tom, bewildered, searched through his records, but found nothing showing in the mule line. Thereupon I proceeded to damn the company for its inefficiency and poor service. Tom promptly came to his defense insisting that I was crazy. But, in a few days, Tom came hastily to notify me that my mules had arrived. Calling on my pals, I found them crated in what might be called log cabins. They were delivered, however, without extra charge.

Beef consumption in the United States in 1956 was 85.4 pounds per capita.



ONE MAN ARSENAL — The 1951 gift of a rifle that a friend didn't want started Ray Wefing on a gun foot. Fascinated by the 45-70 Springfield, a post Civil War gun, Ray has added more than 400 weapons to his one man arsenal. He is shown with part of his collection in the game room of his home in Blackridge, a suburb of Pittsburgh. The walls of the room are lined with pre Civil War rifles and muskets, and the cases have little room left for more antique revolvers and pistols.

Game Commission To Study Plans For Unit Deer Hunt

A plan for a unit hunt system for taking antlerless deer will be presented to the Oregon Game Commission for its consideration when it meets July 11 to set the 1958 hunting regulations. John McKean, chief of the game division, said that if the unit system is adopted it will mark the end of the general either-sex hunts as used since 1952.

This does not mean that the taking of either-sex deer will also come to an end, McKean said. In order to harvest surplus numbers of deer on the various herd ranges, some does as well as bucks must be taken. However, the unit system will not only control the number of hunters in a unit but also control the number of animals taken from each specific area.

The unit hunts will not allow the wide freedom of choice that hunters have had during the either-sex seasons of the past. Under the new system, a hunter would decide in advance which area he wanted to hunt, apply for a permit, and take his chances in a drawing. This would disperse the hunting pressure throughout the state and eliminate any concentration of hunters as has often occurred on several popular herd ranges during past either-sex seasons.

In no way will the unit hunts affect the general buck season. Hunters could still exercise their freedom of choice of hunting territory for the taking of buck deer.

In order to achieve a kill of some 30,000 antlerless deer — about the average number taken each year since 1952 — it would be necessary to issue some 100,000 permits. This may seem like a lot of permits but in reality a conservative minimum when past kill records and hunter success are analyzed.

According to past kill records a

fourth of the hunters holding permits would kill their buck during the general buck season, eliminating them from the unit hunts. Only about one-half of the actual participants would be successful in taking a deer during the unit hunt season.

The problem of handling an estimated 200,000 applications and the issuance of the 10,000 permits through a drawing is now being straightened out by the game staff as they prepare the plan for presentation to the commission at the July hearing.

The plan as it is established now calls for a total of 60 antlerless deer units according to major herd ranges. Forty five of these are on the mule deer ranges of eastern Oregon.

A hunting map would be included in the hunting regulations synopsis, in addition to a large scale map to be issued to each license agent for inspection by prospective applicants in selecting the unit of their choice. Only the number of permits required to achieve the desired kill in each unit would be issued.

McKean said that uniform dates for all units would be desirable and that the hunts should be held the latter part of the general buck season so that hunting parties could plan their trips together. Only those hunters with unused tags would be allowed to participate. Permits would be issued free.

The game chief said that in discussing the unit system during the past year it has received full acceptance from most of the organized sportsmen's organizations in the state. The July hearing will give all hunters an opportunity to voice their views on the proposal.

Gen. John Bidwell first put raisins on the market in California in 1868.

THE COVER

This week's cover picture was shot by Herald and News Photographer Ron Kettler in Langell Valley, using a standard press camera, Superpan film with an exposure of f22 at 100th of a second with a yellow filter.