



**THE FIRST CREAMERY** constructed in Klamath County is shown here. It was built by John Loosley and sons on the banks of the Wood River, about two miles south of Ft. Klamath in the early 1900s.

## Pioneer Basin Family Built First Creamery

**Editor's Note:** This is the second of a two-part historical story dealing with the activities of John Loosley and his family, pioneers of the Fort Klamath area.

By MRS. W. R. LOOSLEY

In 1872 when John Loosley homesteaded in the Wood River Valley there was only one other settler in the whole area. Soon, however, word of the luxuriant grassland spread to other regions and it wasn't many years until there was a family on every 160 acres. The older sons of John and Lucy also took up homesteads as soon as they were old enough, and established families of their own.

Three more children had been born since they moved to the Klamath country. Milan, born in 1873, was one of the first white children born in what later became Klamath County (it was all Jackson County at that time). He enjoyed telling in later years, "The house in which I was born stood in three counties and never was moved." The three counties were Jackson, Lake and Klamath.

Milan seems to have been the "most favored" member of the family. While still quite young he taught himself the Morse Code, strung up a line between his father's home and that of one of his married brothers in order to practice.

Later he edited "The Klamath Republican." Then he entered the Signal Corps of the Army, and traveled over quite a bit of the world, was finally retired with the rank of major, after which he did some research work for the University of California.

John engaged in the raising of cattle, being the first to keep cattle in the valley the year round by harvesting hay from the wild grasses. As the snows came early and lay on the ground until late in the spring it had been considered inadvisable, if not impossible, to feed cattle so long.

He did very well and his herd increased until the winter of 1889-90. Snow fell in October, covering the grass. A cattleman from Langell Valley had been pasturing cattle in the valley, planning to take them to the home ranch for winter feeding. John Loosley, figuring the snow would go off, offered hay to tide him over. "The snow never stays on when it comes this early," John said.

But it did stay on, and more continued to pile up. It was impossible to move the Langell Valley man's cattle, the hay was gone and so were the cattle. All starved to death. It was a winter-to-long remember. It was stated that teams could be driven over the tops of the rail fences all over the valley for months that winter.

**Creamery Started**  
By 1890, with a family on every 160 acres, there became a great need for a cash crop that would come in regularly throughout much of the year. The Loosley family, John and one or two of his sons, decided the time was ripe to start a creamery. If John could run a grist mill he should be able to operate a creamery.

It was built on the north end of his property, on the bank of Wood River, and was the first creamery built in Klamath County. There wasn't a real milk cow in the valley, by present standards, but there were cows, and a few quarts of milk could be extracted from each one, if a person was persevering enough.

The milk was hauled to the creamery in the farm wagon, where it was separated; the cream was bought for butter and the skim milk taken home to feed calves and pigs.

Because of the transportation problem the venture was doomed to failure. It was impossible to get butter out in any condition, especially in hot weather, and that was the time the cows produced the most milk. It must be shipped on freight wagons with a conglomerate of other freight, some of which imparted to the butter a flavor of its own. So this first creamery went the way of many embryonic ventures the world over.

Some years before the creamery venture John's and Lucy's two older sons, George and Fred, had built a flat-bottomed stern-wheel steambot which they named "City of Klamath" with which they hoped to navigate Wood River, expecting a congressional appropriation for the improvement of the stream.

But Congress did not appropriate the money, so they gave up the navigation of this stream. The boat was used some through the years for excursions on upper Klamath Lake, while the brothers turned to carpentry work. George built the Linkville Hotel, near Link River, which he operated for a time before returning to the Wood River Valley, where he and Fred both engaged in ranching.

**Irrigation Ditch**  
In 1897 John, George and Fred Loosley dug an irrigation ditch from farther up the river to irrigate their lands. Now they need not worry about the unpredictable rains. Once the ditches were dug there was little or no expense to maintaining them. Crops increased a hundredfold.

John's health was now failing rapidly. Hard work had taken toll of his magnificent physique. And there was little or no surgery in those days. He died in November, 1897.

Lucy lived on until 1912, doing what she could for others as long as she could (she had long been a sort of practical nurse and midwife, delivering many children in the raw young country). When no longer able to work she spent much time sitting in her front door, when the weather would permit, gazing at the western mountains. It was as if she were thinking, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help."

Both John and Lucy lie buried in the old Fort Klamath Cemetery where sleep four generations (including theirs). The old homestead is still in the family, though the old box house has long since been replaced by a modern log house. Great, great-grandchildren romp over the green pastures they loved so dearly.

## Library Week Begins April 3

State Librarian Eloise Ebert has designated better library service in the state a prime topic for consideration during National Library Week, April 3 through 9.

"Though interest in reading has increased, the facilities for reading have not," she said. "Oregon does not meet minimum standards in library needs."

A survey shows that \$1.37 per person was spent for library service in the state last year. Book circulation in the state increased about 500,000 over last year, however, she said.

"When Oregon is served by a system of libraries which will bring in more books and make them more available, the state can expect greater gains," said Miss Ebert.

She said National Library Week will help erase public apathy concerning libraries.

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Spring, the season that marks the turn of a young man's fancy, the season of day dreaming, spring training, and the recurrence of green thumbs.

For those of you who have chronic green thumbs, a malady preceded by a rash of sunshine, the Klamath Basin Parks and Recreation Department has news. There will be several areas available at Moore Park for amateur gardeners to indulge in their pastime if they don't have a plot of their own to work. The Klamath Basin Golden Age Club will be using one of the available plots as will the local garden club.

A slightly used motorcycle was recently acquired by the Recreation Department for use as a general run about machine with low gas intake. A temperamental vehicle, it works exactly the reverse of an ordinary auto. Bets are being laid on who will be the first one to have the motorcycle ride him.

The current sunshine has encouraged the local citizenry to visit Moore Park. At least 200-300 persons were viewed ushering in the new season which we all hope will last just one more day.

One more item concerning the park — several dogs have been hauled off to the dog poke for disturbing the peace and well being of a few dozen guinea hens at the Moore Park bird pens.

The department sincerely hopes that those people who live in the vicinity of the park and who have dogs will keep the animals in tow. Dogs, many of which are probably some child's pet, might also have an appetite for unroasted guinea. For the benefit of the kids, birds and poodles, please try to keep the dogs out of the park.

A good friend, Earl Brooks, has come up with what we think is a good idea. The formation of a tennis league. The setup will call for two men, two women and a junior tennis player. Each group of five will play another similar group, with a resultant winner.

Sounds like a winner to us and a wonderful opportunity for the many tennis players in the area to get their fill of the game during the summer months. Now that the Recreation Department has some additional courts located at the yet undesignated park on Kit Carson Way, such a program is entirely feasible.

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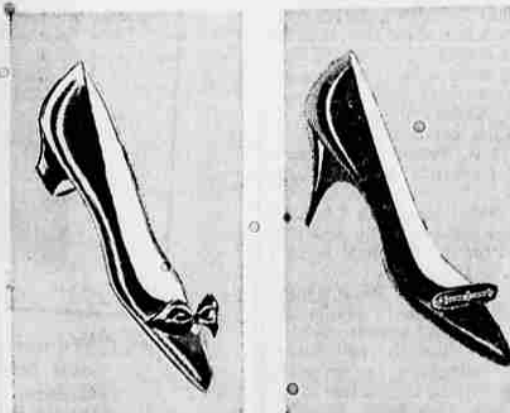
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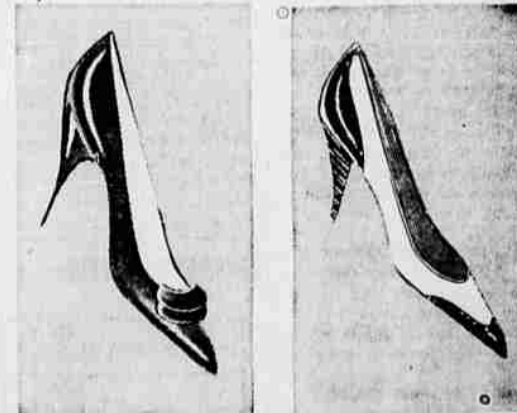
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