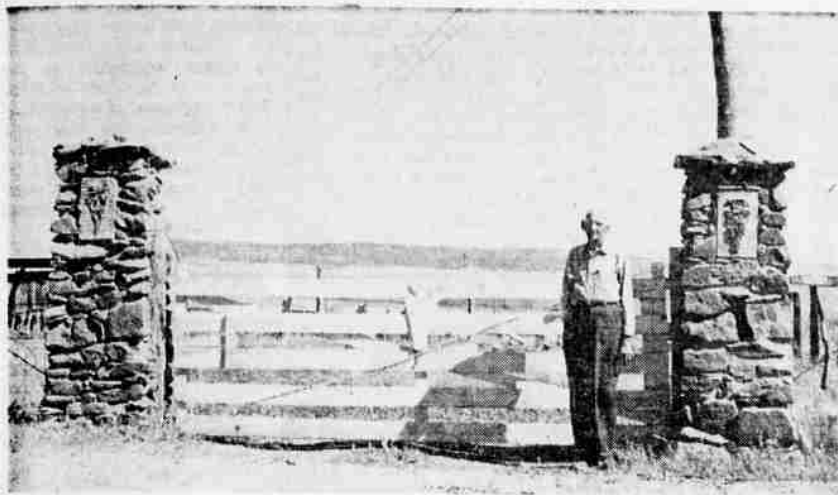
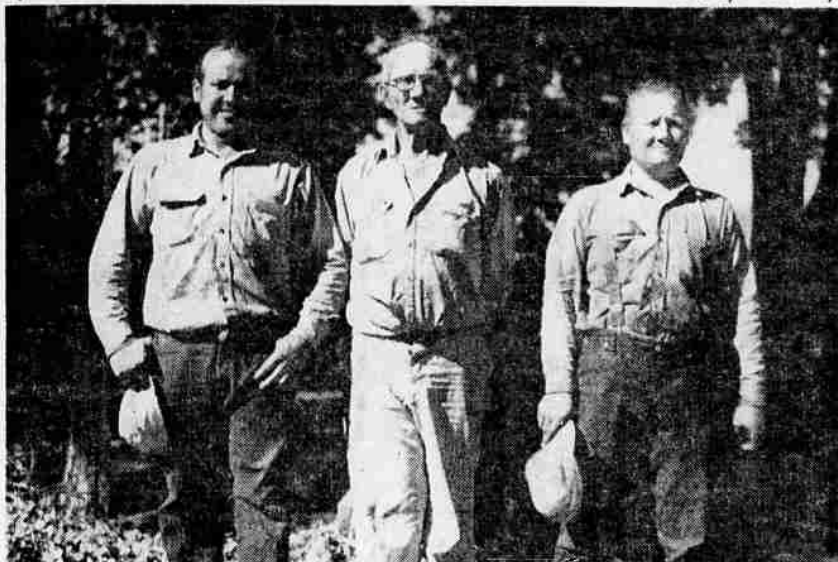
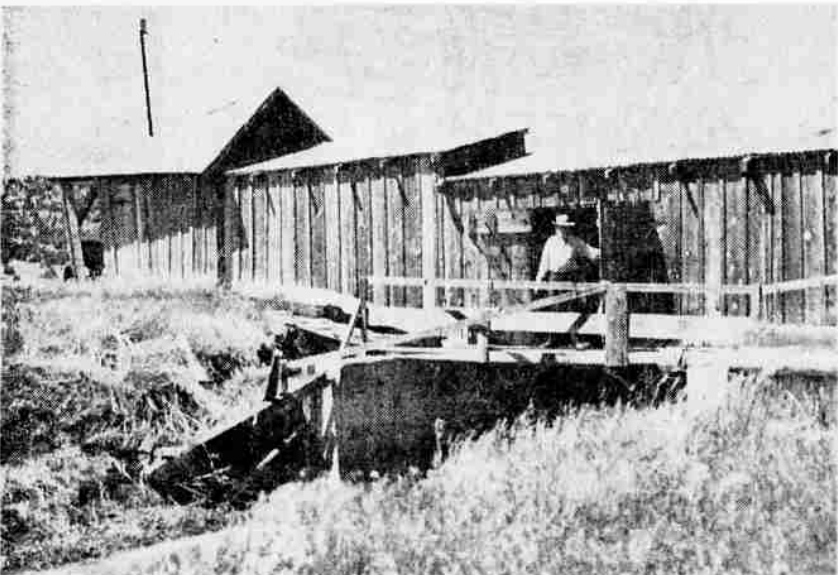




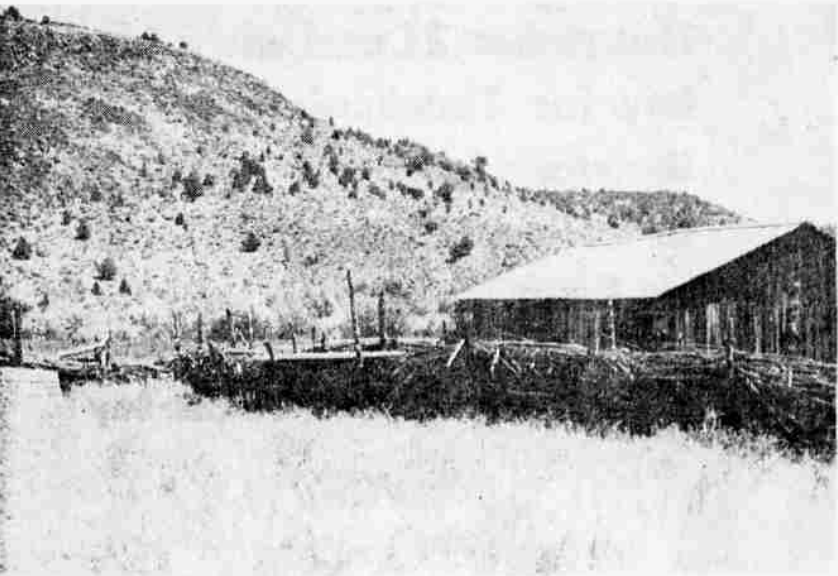
ARROWHEAD RANCH is one of the five lying in the Cow Head Lake drainage. Here a visitor, Arthur Leone, poses beside the colorful gate leading into the property. — Photo by McKinney



LEADING RANCHERS in the Cow Head Lake project are C. A. Youngman, center, and his two sons, Johnny, left, and Abbott. The Youngmans were the first to utilize an extensive program of fertilization on the drained lake. — Photo by McKinney



THE PUMP HOUSE where water is lifted from the Cow Head Lake sump and boosted over the ridge into Warner Valley. — Photo by McKinney



THIS OLD BRUSH CORRAL still stands at the site of an abandoned ranch in the Warner Valley. Nearest neighbor to the lonely ranch is the farming center at Cow Head Lake, some 10 miles south over the California line. — Photo by McKinney

Cow Head Lake, Restored By Private Interests, Is Big Oat Producing Region

By J. O. McKINNEY

A look at a California map will show in the state's northeastern corner an area designated as Cow Head Lake. If the map is of recent vintage, it will carry the information (dry) in brackets just like these.

But a traveler would scarcely be prepared to find there one of the great agricultural areas of the state. All this is the result of private reclamation. But what was once Cow Head Lake is now one big tract of farm lands, owned by about five ranchers, and these five men produce oats on a scale to keep the oat plants busy the year around.

Like many other successful projects, this development began by accident. During the dry year of 1931, when the lake dried up, a neighboring farmer plowed up a portion of the exposed lake bed, and planted barley. The results proved that the answer was to drain the lake, keep off the water, and harvest crops.

This land was not owned by anyone. But riparian rights give owners of shoreline claim to the land bordering on their property. A survey designated the spot that was the lake's center, and all shore property reaches from each outer border to this central spot. Thus the lake was divided much as a pie is allocated to diners.

No patent to these lands has been issued. But the claims are backed up by old laws. Taxes are paid, possession also adds to the legality, and substantive rights will some day compel some agency, either state or national, to issue patents to the owners who have developed it all from an old lake.

Meanwhile, these lands are being sold, leased, farmed, much as any other ranch lands.

Drainage was effected by digging a ditch along the western edge of the lake, draining surplus water into a sump, then lifting it by a turbine pump to drop it over the divide where it flows into Warner Valley in Southern Oregon. That pumping system is something!

The capacity of the pump is 46 cubic feet per second. This adds up to more than 2,000 gallons per minute. A diesel engine of 130 horse power is used to run the big plant, and is backed up by 2 standby engines of 90 horse power each.

But farming this tract presented other difficulties. Cow Head Lake was at an elevation of 5,240 feet. Frosts come late in spring, early in fall. The seasons are short. Barley was tried, but proved to not be quite suited to the seasons. Despite an occasional bumper yield, this grain was abandoned to oats that hit every year.

Still another hazard reared its head. The owners of the old lake shore were not trained farmers. A few years of big crops, and the yield began to show decline. The untrained agriculturists didn't know the answers. They do now! A newcomer from Illinois, C. A. Youngman, spent \$11,000 for super phosphates one year, and opened up the way to a sustained prosperity that appears will never again drop. Now all ranchers know about putting as well as taking.

Youngman, the Illinois rancher who woke up the natives, and his two sons, Johnny, and Abbott, are the big wheels of Cow Head. They, with J. V. Scammon, J. V. Patch, Harry Schadler, and Mike Quirk, farm the entire 2,600 acres in one tract, but observing the boundaries that center like a carved pie. All share in costs of keeping the water drained off as they did to build the system, and all are growing big oat crops that never fail. The average yield of well cared for lands is one and one-half tons of threshed grain per acre. That is more than 90 bushels—a good yield, and from lands that were reclaimed privately.

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