

From Nothing But His Nerve to \$6000 a Year

(Story of George Thompson, Invalidated Soldier, now an Oregon Poultryman, By A. S. Wing)

When George F. Thompson started poultry-farming in 1922 on the Tumulo project near Bend, in Central Oregon, he had little to go on except his nerve.

His health was poor from illness contracted in the army, an illness which had kept him in the hospital for a year and had prevented him from working for four years.

The 40-acre tract for which he paid \$2,300 was good land but it was covered with trees and sagebrush, which he had to clear off.

He knew little of the poultry business except what he had learned in two short courses, lasting a year and a half, at Oregon Agricultural college.

Yet all these and other handicaps couldn't hold George Thompson back.

That very first year, 1922, he saved only 187 pullets out of 470 high-bred baby chicks. But in spite of that he grossed \$960 that first year. His hens earned \$4.50 on the average above feed costs.

He more than doubled his profits the next year and the year after that. In 1925 those came 40 acres grossed \$6,000.

In four years he had paid for his land, buildings, a sedan and a smaller car in addition to providing a good living for himself, a wife and two children.

The poultry industry, which was very small in the Tumulo district until George Thompson came, has followed his lead, developing into a big thing. In 1922 there were only 975 baby chicks shipped into Tumulo; in 1925 there were 51,000. It is fast becoming an important poultry center.

But to get the real story you must go behind these facts to the man himself. That is what I did during a recent trip to that part of Oregon which lies just east of the great Cascade range and near the headwaters of the Deschutes River. Not that Thompson likes to talk about himself. He will talk hens and quote figures by the yard, but more or less pooh-poohs the heroic part of the story which begins at the time he was taken sick with spinal meningitis while at Camp Lewis as a member of Battery D, 34th Field Artillery.

"There's really not much to tell," he said as we walked around the farm watching the active White Leghorns on range and inspecting the neatly kept poultry houses.

"Our sandy soil is rich and we have plenty of water. We can grow alfalfa and other legumes in profusion, thus providing a cheap source of proteins. The climate is mild and we have sunshine nearly 365 days out of the year.

"With these factors in my favor all it took was some hard work and a little figuring. You can't accomplish anything without work, can you, not even in the magazine business."

I can't quote Thompson on his army and hospital experience, nor on his disheartened period of recuperation following his release from the hospital, because he wouldn't talk about these things except to say that the reports had been greatly exaggerated. But here are the facts as I gained them elsewhere:

George F. Thompson was born forty years ago on a Nebraska farm and was raised in western Kansas. At an early age he was cast upon the mercy of a more or less indifferent world and forced to shift for himself. He punched cattle in Colorado and then tried his hand at wheat-farming, only to be cleaned out completely in one bad season. Then he went to the coal fields of Utah, where he worked on the coke ovens until the war broke out. He was married in 1914.

Thompson was assigned to an artillery regiment. But it was not in the cards for him to see the battle fields of France. An attack of spinal meningitis kept him in camp hospital for a year. When the war ended he was trying to recuperate from this disease and from the effects of a mastoid operation. He was partially paralyzed on one side and had a weak heart. Physical work was out of the question.

But gameness and a naturally rugged constitution pulled him through. As a disabled veteran he took the vocational training offered by the Veterans Bureau, graduated from the poultry course at Corvallis and settled at Tumulo

in 1922.

The first thing was to build a four-room house and one poultry house. A girl baby, May, had been born in 1919. Having established his family, Thompson settled down to the business of making poultry pay. But he kept his weather eye to windward and diversified to the extent of raising vegetables and alfalfa hay. They bought a Jersey cow and Mrs. Thompson put out a strawberry patch.

"Our first poultry house cost \$119," he told me. "It has more than paid for itself. The first year our eggs sold for an average of 38 cents a dozen and cost 12 cents to produce.

"The second year our 452 adult birds averaged 224 eggs each. The eggs sold for 35 cents a dozen and, allowing for the loss of 17 hens, gave us a profit of \$4.17 per hen, or a total profit for the farm of \$2,200.

"The third year, 1924, the records on house No. 1 showed a net profit per hen of \$4.10. Our farm gross receipts that year were \$4,700.

"The fourth year, 1925, the flock was renewed by culling out some of the old hens and replacing them with pullets. The records on 220 hens that year showed an average of 215 eggs and a net profit per hen of \$5.07. We sold 10,000 eggs for hatching purposes in Portland at premium of 15 cents a dozen, making the average price 42 cents a dozen. Our 1925 gross income was \$6,000. We have three poultry houses now and keep about 1,000 hens."

Thompson is a great hand for figures. He loves them and keeps them stored away in mind, where he mulls them over and is ready to snap them out for anyone who asks without referring to his account books. For several years he has cooperated with the Oregon Agricultural college as one of their forty demonstration poultry farms keeping just a demonstration stunt with him. He keeps records primarily to know where he stands and which way he is headed.

I found him putting up a big stack of alfalfa hay. He gets about 60 tons in two cuttings from 12 1/2 acres, of which 40 tons is sold and the balance fed out. He grows the Grimm variety.

Mrs. Thompson has proved her-

self a worthy helpmate to a man of George Thompson's mettle. She was ill the day of my visit, so I could not talk to her, but it requires little imagination to picture the dark days she lived through while her husband was fighting gallantly for his life and health, or the labor uncertainty of getting a foothold as pioneers in a new section of the country. A baby boy, Lloyd, was born to the Thompsons in 1925.

Her little strawberry patch has produced an almost incredible amount of fruit and plants and has helped materially in the farm program. In 1924 berries worth \$125 were marketed and \$75 worth of plants; this from a quarter of an acre. The patch has grown to a half-acre. From it were sold in 1925 about 20,000 plants at \$10 a thousand and 100 crates of berries at an average of about \$2.50 a crate.

The Thompsons' house is small but cozy and the lawn is decorated with flower beds and some fine native junipers. They both take an active part in affairs of the community. Mr. Thompson is president of the local poultry club and is always ready to give a beginner the benefit of his experience and knowledge of the poultry business. His health has been completely recovered and to see him today you would not suppose that he had ever had a day's illness in his life.—Farm and Fireside.

The enthusiastic reception of the new "All-American" Six, the latest product of the Oakland Motor car company, by the local motoring public has led, reports R. Hornbeck, manager of the Gilby Motor company, the Oakland dealer organization here, to predict that new sales records will be established during the present month.

Throngs have crowded the sales rooms since the introduction of the new models. Mr. Hornbeck pointed out yesterday that no new model sponsored by the Oakland Motor car company ever attracted such widespread and continued interest. "From reports I have been informed that this condition is not a local one but exists throughout the country as well," he pointed out.

A significant feature of the reception given the new Oakland

"All-American" Six models was the number of people who came to the dealer organization's show rooms several days after the announcement of the cars. "Most of those visitors who came late did so because someone who had seen the new Oakland in the first day or so it was shown had advised them to come," he continued.

"That is the best proof in the world that the new Oakland has made a very decided and very favorable impression on the thousands of motorists who have already seen it.

"One of the reasons for this is, of course, the fact that the new Oakland contains very sweeping changes in design. The All-American Six is a new model that is really new throughout, chassis and body alike. It is a car that represents the very latest trends in modern automotive engineering. The man chiefly responsible for its design is B. H. Anibal, head of the Oakland engineering de-

partment, and one of the best known designers in the industry.

"Such features as the new fuel pump which replaces the vacuum tank, show the original engineering that went into the new Oakland. The performance of the new motor reflects the generous power that has been built into it through long and careful research.

"The fact that Oakland has been able to reduce its prices, in spite of the fact that the new cars are longer, more finely finished and more luxurious in every way has been a source of comment from practically every visitor who has come into our show rooms."

Montavilla—Standard Broom company rebuilds factory lost in recent fire.

Salem—State prison sells \$28,000 worth of flax to Massachusetts company.

Careless smokers burned \$30,000,000 worth of property last year.

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VERNONIA DAY

Saturday, September 10, 1927.

Commemorating the fifth anniversary of the coming of the railroad.
Auspices Vernonia Post 119, American Legion

You are Cordially Invited

Street Dancing, Music, Speaking, Water Sports, Concessions, Commercial Displays, Agricultural Exhibits.

Come! Bring the Family---Don't Miss It.

Thrilling exhibition by Vernonia Fire Department.

NOTE: In event of rain the Street Dance will be held in the Legion hall.

The Rebekahs will serve pie, cake and coffee. Womens Relief Corps, beans and salad. The American Legion auxiliary will serve hot dogs, hamburgers and coffee. The Women of Woodcraft will sell confetti, novelties, etc. and a tag sale conducted by the Pythian Sisters.

All Receipts of the day to go to the City Park Playground Fund.