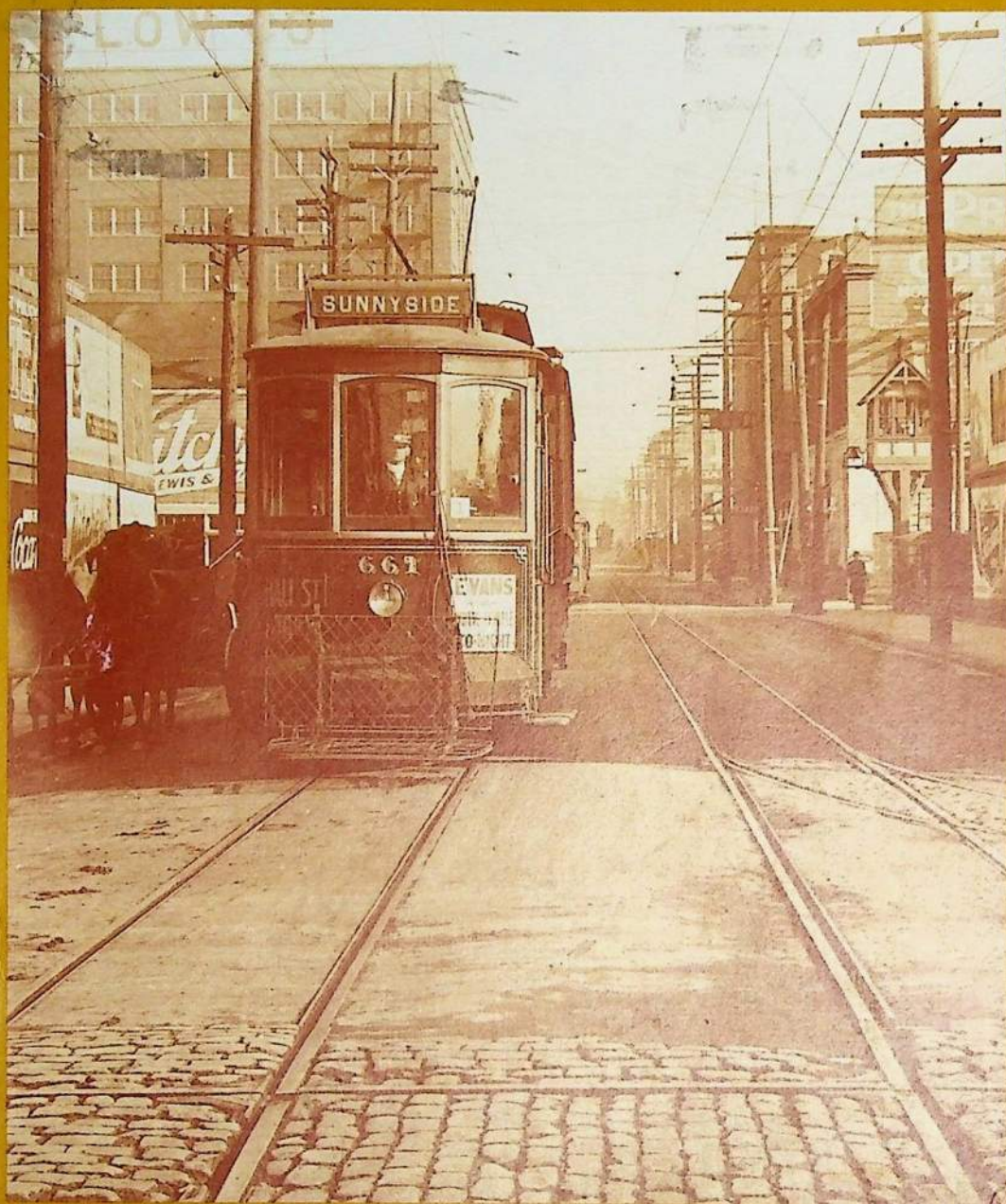
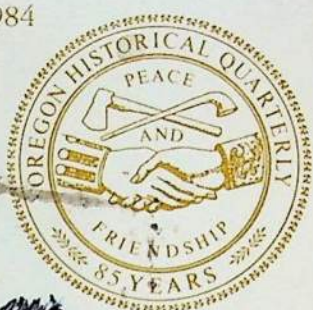


SUMMER, 1984

Oregon Historical Quarterly



Contents

JERRY LEMBCKE

*Now at Sociology
Dept., Lawrence
University.*

Labor and Education:
Portland Labor College,
1921-1929

117

JOHN DRISCOLL

*Journalism-history
writer, presently
at Bend*

Gilchrist, Oregon,
A Company Town

135

FREDERICK BRACHER

*Growing up in
Portland in teens
and twenties.*

How It Was Then:
The Pacific Northwest
In the Twenties, Pt. III

155

MARVIN MOORE

*Report from a
Spokane architect.*

Palouse Hills Farmstead
Architecture, 1890-1915

181

CARLOS A. SCHWANTES, ed.

*Visiting Associate Professor,
University of Idaho,
presents comments on
the UP "streamliner."*

Riding on the
City of Portland, 1935

194

JOHN F. KILKENNY

*Judge, U.S. Court
of Appeals, 9th Circuit,
recalls structures
now passed from view.*

Shepherds and Shelters,
Morrow County, 1880-1940

209

*Book Reviews and
Recent Items*

214

JOHN F. KILKENNY

Shepherds and Shelters, Morrow County, 1880-1940

BY 1900, it is said, some 200,000 head of sheep roamed the bunch grass, sagebrush and greasewood of Oregon's Morrow County. Because the writer came from that area and his family was vitally involved with sheep, some things pertinent have come specially into his awareness and memories. But this account is not about the animals, nor the stalwarts who herded and guarded them, but about the houses that protected the sheep at time of birth and from sudden and freezing death after shearing in the springtime.

History is built not only on the lives of men and women, but also on their buildings and what happens to them. It is an ever changing panorama. What was present in yesteryears is in all probability changed or has now disappeared. In this discussion on sheepsheds, it must not be forgotten that they were not the only such sheep shelters in the county. Literally hundreds of catch-pens were located in every draw, canyon, gulch or natural windbreak during the heyday of the sheep operations. The sheds and shelters mentioned are only those that I have seen in my lifetime. Beyond question, many had passed out of existence or were located in areas in the county where I did not see them.

Range lambing was commonplace before World War I and, to some extent, thereafter. Perhaps 90% of the lambs dropped during the daytime on the open range were transported by the herder's sheephook with mother following to some convenient catch-pen. Each morning the drop wagon (a buckboard equipped with side and end panels and drawn by team) and its driver would visit the different pens, and place the lambs in the wagons. The mothers would follow the drop wagon to the sheep camp lean-to or shed where they would be reunited with their offspring.

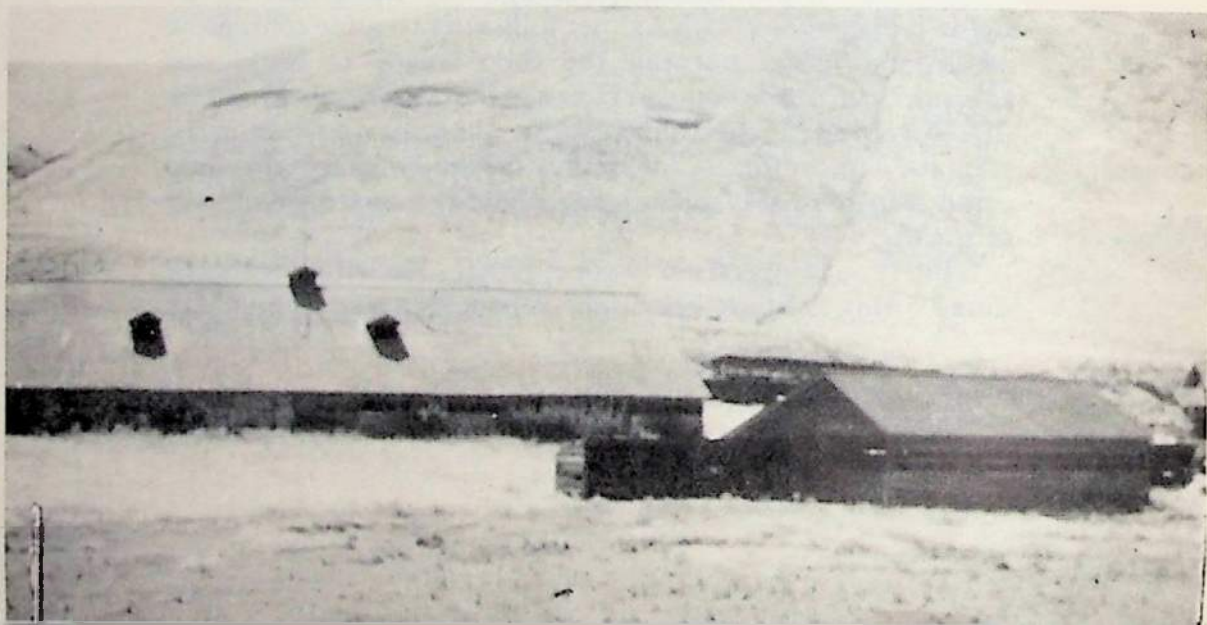
This type of operation is gone forever. No longer is there a range spring lambing operation. Where once roamed hundreds



A (above), Kilkenny shed, Hinton Creek, Kilkenny Fork. (Author's photos.)



Above, B, Pat Doherty's Vinson shed; below, C, Pete French shed (formerly Doherty).



of thousands of sheep, now thousands upon thousands of cattle graze upon the abundant and nutritious grass. This slowly evolving process of changing from sheep to cattle was in no way dramatic. The process was gradual and the change necessary. No longer did the sheep owners have the influx of Irish, Scottish, and Basque greenhorns to herd the sheep. Consequently, labor problems were insurmountable. The cattle operation required far less manpower. . . .

[Ed. Note: The author's manuscript includes a list of more than 60 locations with identifying comments plus references to others, but those printed here have accompanying photos. Most of the sheds had disappeared, one way or another. The complete manuscript may be consulted in the Oregon Historical Society library.]

John Kilkenny

Up Kilkenny Fork, a branch of Hinton Creek, was located what was said to be the largest sheepshed in Oregon. (See photo A.) It would accommodate 4,000 head of sheep. It was not torn down until 1978, when some of the material from the shed was used in the construction of a new horse barn. This shed could accommodate 16 shearing machines and pens. Additional Kilkenny sheds were located on Little Butter Creek, at Sand Hollow and the Blacksmith sheep camps. Other lean-to type lambing sheds were located at Mud Spring, Thompson and Turner places.

Pat Doherty

Pat owned a large spread of land on which he ran thousands of sheep. To accommodate them he had many sheds. At least two were at his headquarters ranch in Vinson. (See photo B.) Other large substantial sheds located on his ranch were those on what is now the Pete French ranch (see photo C) and the Chapman ranch, now owned by Pete French (see photo D). Also at Gurdane (see photos E and F). Pat was one of the outstanding leaders of the Irish in Morrow and Umatilla counties and left a splendid family that has carried on the operation of the ranch. His father, John Doherty, built the first sheepshed at Vinson.

Pat erected a sawmill at Gurdane around 1920 and cut his own timber to build a very large handsome sheepshed in that area. When he married Mary Ann Doherty in 1920, the wedding dance was held in the hay loft of this large shed.



D, above, Frank Chapman shed (now owned by French).



F, above, and E, below, sheds at Gurdane. (Author's photos.)





G. K. G. Warner shed near Vinson. (Author's photo.)

K. G. Warner

This massive shed was located in the upper reaches of a branch canyon of Butter Creek, some three miles from Vinson. It was operated by the Warner family for many decades. (See photo G.)

This list of sheepsheds is not intended to cover all that were in existence in the early part of the 20th century. Many were built, used, and consumed in the ever expanding wheat farming operation. Those shed are just ghosts of the past, remembered only by the dead.

A few words about the faithful night herders of the sheds should be added. Those were the men responsible during the lambing season for taking care of the night-time lambs, placing the mother and offspring in a separate pen, and giving the lamb its first suckle of milk. Lonely hours, even lonelier than those spent on the range, but nonetheless, essential labor to the over-all sheep operation.

Goodbye old sheds and shelters. You were monuments to three-quarters of a century which witnessed the influx and then disappearance of hundreds of thousands of woolly creatures and their constant companions, the thousands and thousands of Australian shepherd and collie dogs.