

HOPS

The ranchers knew that they could raise hops and fruit, but hops was a highly speculative crop, and at the time fruit had no market. It took plenty of cash to put hops into a bale, and if the price was depressed when the hops were ready for market, the hop-grower, or his creditors more than likely, took a cleaning. But if the price happened to be up, he rolled in money. I believe that in one of these years concerning which I am writing hops went to more than thirty cents a pound; and I have heard it said that during some previous year they reached a dollar a pound.

I have heard it claimed that in Yakima Valley it was unnecessary to spray hops--an expensive procedure--as, if the hop-louse exposed himself to the sun in July and August, his goose was cooked. But, later, the hop-grower found that he had to spray or he would have a poor crop.

The church people, at least some of them, thought the hop-grower was associating with the devil, but I believe that most of the growers whose grandmother's voice was getting too insistent, quieted her by raising hops for hop-pillows instead of for the manufacture of beer.

The hop-picking season was great for business. The fee for picking hops was one dollar a box, and an Indian squaw could make three or four dollars a day in the fields. The bucks, of course, only assisted in spending the money. But, if you wanted to get a squaw into your hair, all you had to do would be to kick the box into which she was fluffing hops

from a blanket. One kick would make them settle three or four inches.

The Indians came from all over the Northwest to pick hops and attend the Indian Fair which was given each fall to attract them to the valley. They came from Alaska, Puget Sound, Oregon, Idaho and Montana, and Sunday was their market day.

They were paid with hop-tickets by the growers, these passing as cash at the stores. I have known the I. H. Dills store to sell as many as five hundred dollars worth of silk handkerchiefs and Stetson hats to the Indians on a single Sunday.

Sundays, the sidewalks along Yakima Avenue would be literally covered with squaws and papooses. On one occasion I saw a drunken buck filled the brim with skookum chuck ride down the plank sidewalk under the awnings and make all his folks scurry into the street for safety. He kept it up until a policeman grabbed him and threw him into the skookum house.

I believe at times there were actually more Indians than whites in the population, as in 1893 and 1894 these Indian Fairs were gala occasions. The merchants provided prizes of saddles, bridles, chapps, blankets and gaudy silk handkerchiefs for which the Indians contested. I remember a four-mile horse race in which Indian riders rode onto the track at each quarter-pole and lashed with quirts each race horse as he was passing. One grey horse, like Abou Ben Adhem, led all the rest for about three miles, then his tail stuck up as

straight as a poker and all the other horses passed him. Then I knew whence came the expression, "he threw up his tail".

Most of the Indians spoke Chinook, a jargon devised by the Hudson Bay men for communicating with them. You could buy a paper bound Chinook dictionary for twenty-five cents, and most old timers spoke the jargon fluently,

It always seemed to me that one Chinook word, "~~K~~cultus", needed no translation. But, possibly, I am like the darkey who wondered how all the animals acquired their names. "Elephants, tigers, lions, how come they got them names? But a hog! Why anybody ought to be able to tell he's a hog, cause he looks just like a hog." That is the way I am about "~~K~~cultus". It seems to me that anybody should be able to tell that it means "bad" or "no good".

Few white men could speak "delate siwash" or the true Indian tribal language. It was claimed that Matt Bartholet, who had lived among the Indians since childhood, could speak it. But I saw him one time trying to talk to an old Indian, and the latter appeared to think that Matt's gutturals were pretty ~~K~~cultus. But that may have been because the subject matter of the "wah wah" was a shawl which had been stolen from one of the stores.

I recall a sign in one of the Yakima stores which read, "Potlatch chickamon, or halo ictas" which meant in English, "Put up the money or you don't get the goods", a sort of fore-runner of the cash-and-carry of recent years.

I cannot recall the names of many of the Indians. Charley Ross, George Colwash, Old Sloan, John Molisset, Moses Strang, Cayase Jack, Alazawell, Fish Hawk, are a few. Fish Hawk was a Umatilla and his Indian name was Shuk Shuk. He was a mean Indian and a tough looker but I onetime saw his picture in a national magazine accompanied by the assertion that he was a perfect type of the American Indian. Then there were the Spencers, the tyheee of whom owned most of the townsite of Toppenish. I imagine almost everybody in Yakima, even the Johnny-come-latelys have heard of Oscar Spencer, the crown-prince of that family. I was in Toppenish in 1906 when a blanket, long-haired Indian and a tough looking white man passed me. The white man was using some profanity that would have shocked a minister's son and the Indian admonished him, " dont talk like that, there might be some ladies around." That excited my curiosi ty and, upon inquiry, I was informed that ~~must~~ the Indian must have been Oscar Spencer, who attended Carlisle Indian School, had returned and gone wild again. Will Crook, who was then living near Mabton, told me of an occasion when old man Spencer received a telegram which he could not read. He asked the messenger boy to read it for ^{him} and, dated from Spokane, it read: " Your son Oscar has been shot in the head by a policeman with a fortyfour. Not expected to live. Come at once." Spencer asked the boy to read the telegram again, which he did, then he laughed and said, " they can't kill Oscar with no fortyfour," which prognosis proved to be correct, as shortly afterward, Oscar was back on the reservation making the other Indians eat out of hand.

FRUIT

Whoever it was that formulated the Northern Pacific land policy must have taken a leaf from Henry George. They realized that the original settlers, the coyotes, jack-rabbits, and rattlesnakes, added little to the value of land, and what was needed was people and still more people to produce tonnage for the railroad to haul and to add community value to the land. To do this they offered every inducement for settlement, cheap fare and cheap freight for the impedimenta of settlers.

The cattle industry produced little tonnage to haul, as did the hops, no matter how much was produced. But there were possibilities of magnitude in fruit.

The pioneers knew they could raise fruit of excellent quality, and all they needed to do so was to plant the trees, attend to irrigation and the task was done. There were no coddling moth or aphids to battle, consequently no expensive spraying, for you could not find a wormy specimen in an orchard. But there was no market locally, and the ~~freight~~ ^{EXPRESS} rate on the railroad was prohibitive.

Every ranch had its domestic orchard which varied in size. The larger ones produced so much fruit that when the fruit hungry applied, they were more than likely told, "Go in and help yourself, even a wagon load if you think you can use that much." I have shot what we called prairie-chickens in orchards where every step I took I landed on a fine ^{all} ~~Alberta~~ peach that nobody had taken the trouble to pick. The only

orchard that I can recall that could even remotely be called a commercial orchard was that of Bicknell's in Parker Bottom, and I do not believe that was very profitable. Then the railroad commenced to wake up, built the Big Ditch which went through Parker Bottom into the Zillah and Sunnyside country, and gave an express rate which enabled the orchardist to ship his produce.

It was then that the second wave of settlers began to arrive, and those with horticultural knowledge and experience began to do their stuff. They would buy from the cattle ranches acreage that was supplied with water, clear off the sagebrush and plant their trees, while the cowman who had sold the land for around a hundred dollars an acre would ^{IN SHAME} hide his head and feel sorry for the sucker he had landed.

The first venture of this kind I can recall was when ^{FS. WALDEN} ~~S. G. Waldron~~, an ex-preacher who left the vineyard of the Lord, bought some land from Purdy Flint and started what was destined to be a real orchard. I remember when his son, Smiley was clearing the sagebrush for the spread, and it did not look good to me. But I recall a few years later asking a friend in Tacoma, "How did Wald^{EN}ron come out with his orchard?" and his reply, "Well, he only sold ten thousand dollars worth of peaches this year, and I don't know how many cherries." In 1906 Waldron told me that he had been offered \$100,000 for his orchard and had refused because he did not know where he could invest the money and get the same returns.

But, now, that is old stuff. Uncle Sam has stepped in

with his bankroll and built reservoirs and canals and tunnels, the growers have formed their associations and are shipping their fruit by trainloads all over the world. But I imagine it is not all beer and skittles with most of them. Like every other avocation of man they have to know their stuff, or no dice.

HUNTING AND FISHING

As may be surmised by the reader my chief interests were hunting and fishing. I had as one accomplice, H. A. Griffin, who tried to make money in these primitive pursuits and slough it off running a grocery store.

Griffin had a mare that could trot a mile in about 2:90, a dogcart and a spaniel bitch which was a good retriever. We knew about every good fishing-hole and duck-march in the country, and we wasted much good time around them.

We were not very successful deer hunters, though we tried it several times at the heads of the Nachez and Wenas. The deer were there but we did not know our stuff like "Mud" Powell, who could mow down a band while on the run.

I remember when Griffin tried to elicit some cheap deer information from an old Indian buck and squaw and got his Chinook a trifle mixed. He kept talking about "moosem" instead of "mowitch" which amused the Indians. There is quite a difference between the two.

In different sections there were many birds which we called prairie-chickens, but they were not the same as those in Illinois. I believe now they were what I later knew as willow-grouse. One afternoon Griffin and I killed twenty-seven out of one flock on the Charley Ross ranch on the reservation just above where Toppenish now stands. It was July, and we had to hustle to distribute them before they spoiled.

There were no stringent game laws in those days, and we violated many canons of conservation such as shooting ducks

in the spring, which may have been the starter for Ding Darling's efforts the past few years.

One of our favorite duck shooting grounds was the Moxee marsh made by sub-irrigation, and the way we threw lead over it should have made it a good mineral location. Those were the days of black powder, smokeless powder coming along about 1892. We loaded our own shells, and when we heard of smokeless, we tried some of it. But we had not learned that it required a special primer, and we loaded it in black powder shells.

The first time we tried the new loads we hunted prairie chickens in Parker Bottom. The chickens were plentiful, but there was something wrong with the ammunition. One shell stood up strong enough for Griffin to kill a chicken, and we did not realize how bad they really were.

We stopped for dinner at a ranch owned by a man by the name of McCarty, and when he refused to let us pay for it, I prevailed on Griffin to give him his chicken, winding up ~~the~~ ^{my} argument with, "Oh, we'll get plenty more this afternoon."

In the afternoon the shells proved to be complete duds. They would make a little pop, and the shot would go about fifty feet, rattling among the trees, and we did not kill a chicken. All this time I had to listen to Griffin's monologue: "Oh! Yes, we'll get plenty of chickens this afternoon. I guess we're just about the damndest chicken hunters in the world", and much more to the same effect.

I had in reserve a black powder shell which I was saving

for an emergency, and as we entered the Bicknell ranch I killed the biggest sage-hen I have ever seen. He was so big that I had visions of having him mounted. Then we went to the ranch house for a drink of water.

While we were drinking from an old chain-and-bucket well, Mrs. Bicknell came out to talk to us and she noticed the sage-hen I had laid on the ground. "My goodness!" she exclaimed, "that's the biggest sage-hen I ever saw. My! but he is a monster." Griffin walked around, picked up the sage-hen and handed it to Mrs. Bicknell. "Here, Mrs. Bicknell, you take it. We'll get plenty more this evening." I could not say anything, and as she accepted it, we returned with empty game bags.

One day Griffin asked me to go with him below Old Town where, he said, he had found a dandy place for ducks. "Along about dark they come in by the hundreds," he said. As usual, I was ready to go, and when we got there he showed me a pond in the edge of some tulés which looked like a good place. He explained that there was another place further on but he could not tell me how to find it and he would go there. I thought he was pretty kind and I was a little suspicious, but as my location looked like a good one, I said nothing and he departed.

I stayed there until dark and only one teal came in, which I managed to get. But all the time I could see flock after flock of mallards going in the direction Griffin had gone, and could hear his pump-gun sounding like the battle of the Marne.

Along about dark I heard him coming splashing through the tules, and when he appeared, I saw that he was loaded down with ducks. He asked me what I got and when I told him, he laid down his burden and rolled on the ground in laughter. When we got to town and unloaded at his grocery store, he laid the ducks on a counter, keeping my lonesome teal carefully separated from his mallards.

Some ladies were in the store at the time and one of them exclaimed, "Oh! Mr. Griffin, what a nice bunch of ducks!" "Yes," Griffin replied, "Strat and I killed 'em. He killed that little one over there, and I killed all the rest," and how he laughed.

That episode rankled in my craw for some time, but it was quite a while before I got even.

We made occasional trips in the winter up the Ahtanum where there were some warm sloughs, and we usually killed a few ducks. On one of these trips we separated, he going one way and I going another. I did not get a shot, but I found a hen mallard which, no doubt, had been wounded and crawled up the bank of the stream and died. I gazed at her for a minute or two, finally picking her up, and, after limbering up her stiff neck, I stuck her in my coat. I had no idea what I was going to do with it.

Along about dark I met Griffin near the dog-cart, and he immediately asked, "What did you get?" I replied, "One mallard." "Well, I did not do much better. I only got a mallard and a teal."

Nothing more was said until we got nearly to town when he opened up with, "Say, Strat! You're eating at the hotel, and you won't eat a whole mallard by yourself. I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll trade my teal for your mallard and then I'll have enough for a mess." I agreed and we traded ducks.

I waited long enough to be certain that he had eaten my mallard, then I told him where I got it. Was he mad? He said, among other things, "You didn't know what was the matter with that duck." "No," I replied, "neither did I eat it." Some fourteen years later, he was still hot under the collar about that trade.

Griffin was an expert fly fisherman, and during more than forty years of fishing, I do not believe I have seen a better one. There was a deaf miller working in the flour mill who asked Griffin to teach him the art of casting. Griffin took him on, and they made a trip up the Nachez. They were crowding the season a trifle, did not expect good fishing so did not take any lunch, expecting to return before noon. But the fishing was good and they kept going. Griffin was a great eater, and when he found a camp on the bank of the stream, he tackled the woman in charge for something to eat. The woman recognized him, and refusing any pay, stated she would be glad to give them what she had.

While they were eating, Griffin, trying to pay for the meal, kept bragging about some pickles that were on the table. He surely wished that his wife could make such fine pickles.' Then he had the wind knocked out of him by the lady informing him, "Well, Mr. Griffin, that's the way I make my living,

selling the recipes for making those pickles. I sell them for five dollars each." The miller spoke up, "I'll take one," ~~PENGLING UP~~ plunging for his five dollars. But Griffin tried to side-step by saying, "I came fishing and only brought a little change with me." Then the miller offered to loan him the money, and there he was with his pickle recipe.

He did not tell me about it for some time, but when he did he offered to sell me his recipe for four-bits. I did not buy.

One fall J. Elgin Baxter and I conceived the crazy notion of going down Yakima River in a boat. We thought we would get some good duck shooting because the ducks did not know much about boats, and we thought we did.

We had a sixteen-foot skiff built, and we started just before Christmas, and I. H. Dills accompanied us. He decided to quit just below Old Town and walked back. Baxter and I kept going though it was a tough proposition. We nearly wrecked several times, and there was a fog raising which froze on the trees and bushes--the ducks we killed were frozen so solid that they rattled around in the boat like wooden decoys.

We had no particular destination, but a blizzard came up and made us select one, pronto. I thought we were close to the Purdy Flint ranch, which proved to be correct, so we abandoned the boat and started across country in a howling snow storm. I think that one of the most pleasing sights of a long life was that of Smiley Waldron ~~chopping~~ chopping wood near his

cabin. We sailed into that harbor without much delay, and were warmly welcomed with heat and grub by Smiley.

A day or two later, the blizzard still doing its stuff, Smiley took us to town in a wagon. He drove sitting in a spring-seat, with a derby hat on his head, while Baxter and I nearly froze in the wagon-box. I believe now, as I did then, that the reason Smiley could stand that extreme cold so well was, he was red-headed.

A few days later, Griffin, W. H. Chap^{MAN}~~man~~, and two others whose names I cannot recall, decided that they would try the boat trip. They had much argument as to who was to steer the boat, but whoever won out, he managed to wreck it near Old Town. The party lost their guns and ammunition, saw their whiskey keg bob serenely around a bend, and found themselves perched on a pile of driftwood trying to muster courage to swim twenty feet through icy water to the shore. They finally made it, and had a chilly hike before they found transportation back to town. Later they tried it again with better success.

When we wanted to have a real hunt we went down near the mouth of the Yakima to Jock Morgan's or to the Baxter & Sharkey ranch, getting off the train at either Mabton or Kiona. I have shot as many as two hundred and fifty black-powder shells on one of these hunts, being almost kicked to a jelly in the process. Towards the finish I did not like to see a duck fly near me, as I knew I would shoot at it, and that would hurt me more than it did the duck. We killed almost

every specie of ducks, brant and geese, and on one hunt Charley Morgan killed a swan.

Joe Baxter maintained a residence for his family in town, but he had a woman cook for his cowboys at the ranch. She was not what you would call a she-Delmonico. On one hunt to the ranch Joe went along, and that he might enjoy razzing us about our poor marksmanship, he drove us around in a buckboard. One day Joe thought he would provide us a treat so he had the cowboys kill a fat steer. He cut off a top-sirloin steak about two inches thick, which would have made any real cook laught right out loud. He sent it to the kitchen with the request that it be cooked for dinner. When it came onto the table, it was boiled!

A day or two later we thought we would try out the cook again with a fat Canada goose. When it came on the table boiled, we quit her and started for Horse Heaven after geese.

Well, we jumped right out of the biling kettle into the fly-trap, as the cook at Everett Robert's ranch was just as bad, only different.

The time was the month of November, and stabled within fifty yards of the house were about thirty head of horses and a number of cows and calves. There were no screens on the house, and it seemed to me that about all the flies this side of kingdom come were trying to get into that house in search of warmth and nourishment. In every dish that came on the table there were the remains of many flies whose spirits had crossed the Great Divide. There were flies in the gravy,

flies in the coffee, flies on the meat. While I had a pretty strong stomach, it was hardly equal to this occasion, and I confessed to Elgin Baxter that I did not believe I could stand it. I will always remember his reply: "We have to stand it; the goose hunting is going to be fine." He was right. We had to stand it; we did stand it; and the goose hunting was fine.

The hunting of geese over profile decoys was introduced into Yakima County by Albert Saylor, who had learned the technique^{up} along the Platte River, in Nebraska, I believe. Joe Baxter asserted that the method that Saylor used was to tie a sheaf of oats onto his caboose, and when the geese got to picking at the oats, he would whirl around and shoot them. But that was a mild exaggeration.

The decoys were made of sheet-metal cut from a pattern of a goose, and if properly painted, and looked at broadside, they could hardly be told from a real goose at fifty yards. But if the edge of the decoy was pointing to you, you could not see it.

I remember an occasion when Saylor, Dan Lesh and Colonel Asa Walker were hunting at Jock Morgan's and Saylor stuck a few of these decoys into a sandbar in the Yakima River.

Lesh saw them and undertook to crawl up to them. When he got opposite them he could not see them and concluded that he had not crawled far enough. When he got further up and looked again, he saw that they were below him, so he went into reverse. Just as he was about to fire, Saylor raised

out of a blind and stopped him from shooting.

Horse Heaven was a table land which rose above the Yakima River and was covered with dry ranches raising wheat. The geese roosted at night on sandbars in the Columbia River, and soon after daylight, and again in the late afternoon, they came to the wheat fields to feed.

The way you did it was to dig a trench in the middle of a wheat field far from any cover that might arouse the suspicions of the geese. Then you had to pack the dirt away from the trench so as not disturb the contour. Then with your decoys staked around your dugout, when the geese approached, you stooped over in the trench, covering your back with a piece of burlap thatched with straw. If you caught the flight, the geese would come right to you, flock after flock; but if your layout was off their line of flight, you sat there and shivered from the cold without firing a shot.

The first time I caught the flight I experienced the *GILKAT* ~~utmost~~ difficulty holding myself down in that hole until the geese came within range. In spite of all my resolutions I would raise and fire when there was no possibility of killing one. They looked so big that I thought they were right on me when they were at least seventy-five yards away. I could hear my shot hit their breasts and wings, and, with much honking, they would veer away to some other point where there was no jackass to disturb them.

Finally, as one flock of about ^{thirty} came in, instead of shooting both barrels, I shot only the right hand one with the

usual result, and stood ^{up} right ~~up~~ in my dugout in complete disgust. As the flock began to veer away, one old boy down at the end sensed something was wrong, and he attempted a shortcut right over me. I can see yet the clay on his feet, and what I did to him with that left-hand barrel and a load of No. 2s was plenty, and he hit the ground like a trunk. After that I managed to hold my exuberance in check, but I never could kill the number of geese that other hunters claimed they killed.

When we returned to North Yakima, Elgin had one old honker that was a moose, but he had a bum leg which had been crippled by a previous hunter. When the goose was served at Thanksgiving dinner which I attended at the Baxter home, he came flanked by a wooden crutch that Joe had laboriously whittled. That was Joe's way of spoofing us for jumping on a cripple.