

Milroy

Testing the Yakima valley as an agricultural country ran through the gamut of cattle, hops, peaches, prunes, pears and apples said B.R. Milroy, pioneer, in recalling the various stages through which farming passed before advancing to diversified production with apples the leading crop.

Cattle raising was the principal industry in pioneer days. Hops were the first cultivated crop that raised hopes of large profits, but after this reached stable proportions prices declined and little or no profit was left after the transportation by teams to The Dalles and thence to boat to Portland was paid.

The first fruit shipped out of the valley was peaches grown by Prof. Miller on his place in the Fruitvale district. His place was in a spot where frost seldom struck so good crops were produced.

The Tacoma hotel of Tacoma contracted for these peaches and whether Miller made the contract direct or through R.S. Morgan, Pioneer shipper, Milroy was not sure. But Miller made money and farmers observing this began to plant peaches on a large scale.

Hopes of making peaches a leading crop were blasted when a severe winter killed the trees in many orchards.

The early planters did not know the frost pockets and as much of the acre was on unsuitable land the trees were pulled.

Morgan was the first man to open a produce business in Yakima and he handled it in a shack along the railroad on the west side. His first shipments to the coast were in 1889 or 1890. He handled tomatoes, watermelons and various vegetables. Tomatoes were unusually well received on the coast, Milroy said.

The setback in the production of peaches turned growers first to prunes which were planted on an extraordinarily large scale, mostly below the gap.

Driers were built to care for the crop and the dried fruit was in demand on foreign ships making Puget sound ports.

Prune production increased not only in the Yakima valley but in the Walla Walla and Milton districts and elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest. Before long production was on so extensive a scale that prune growing was no longer profitable.

Some one started to grow pears and that fruit became a big crop. Apple growing was begun about the same time. Plantings increased greatly from year to year and many varieties were tested. Much of the planting was in frost pockets and river bottom land and many orchards in such locations have been removed, Milroy said.

Alfalfa was introduced in the Yakima valley in the late eighties or early nineties. When the hay was first shipped to the coast feeders would not use it. They observed the coarse stems and assumed the new kind of hay was unfit for their stock. Yakima shippers were obliged to almost give the hay away to get dairymen on the coast to try it.

An agricultural fair held in 1888 opened the eyes of all who saw it to the possibilities of production in the Yakima valley. Hops, tobacco, and a great variety of vegetables and field crops were on display.

The fair was held in the hall built by F.W. Switzer on the west side of North First street on the second or third lot north of the alley in the first block.

In the middle eighties a Naches farmer sent White Dent corn to the world's corn exposition in New Orleans and won first prize. That attracted attention to the Yakima valley and demonstrated it could produce fine corn--Yakima Herald, June 6, 1937.

Yakima put up a strong fight for the location of the capital here but lost to Olympia when Ellensburg entered and continued in the race, R.B. Milroy, who was active in boosting for Yakima said in recounting the incidents of the contest.

Yakima, then North Yakima, first started the fight during territorial days. Twice the issue was before the legislature and once Yakima came within two votes of winning, but no decision was reached and when the territory was admitted to statehood February 22, 1889, the constitution provided the choice should be by a vote of the people.

As talking points in boosting for Yakima as the seat of government in territorial days were its central situation and the distance to Olympia from eastern parts of the territory.

A campaign was put on for subscriptions of money to care for the expenses and the purchase of the tract to be donated to the territory for capital grounds. Trips were made through county districts obtaining subscriptions from farmers. Phil Stanton drove a team taking Milroy on a two-day trip through the Cowiche and Ahtanum districts signing farmers.

The Cowiche district included the Tieton section as well. The trip was made while snow was on the ground and they stopped with a farmer at night. Notes were signed carrying a clause saying they were void if the capital was not obtained. Yakima's representatives in the territorial legislature sprung the issue at the session in the late eighties and that kept the people of Yakima stirred up and in the fight.

When Washington became a state in 1889 the contest under the requirements of the constitution was renewed by Olympia and Yakima with Ellensburg in the fight and active work was started all over the state and in the state political conventions.

The Republican convention was held in Walla Walla in July and the Yakima

of 15 of which Milroy was a member traded votes and did everything possible to obtain support for Yakima's aspirations to become the capital.

Milroy had announced his candidacy for judge of the superior court for the four counties of Yakima, Kittitas, Klickitat and Franklin. Benton county was then a part of Yakima county.

The Yakima delegation had Col. L.S. Howlett as its candidate for governor. Business detained Milroy so he did not go on the train with the delegation. He boarded the next train which was a special from Seattle carrying boosters for E.P. Ferry for governor. Ferry had served two terms as territorial governor and was popular throughout the state.

The king county delegation was in the first instance committed to John R. Kinnear of Seattle as candidate for governor, but a split occurred later when sentiment in Seattle became strong for Ferry. When Milroy got on the train, the Ferry boosters at once wished to put a Ferry button on him but he fought them off while going through the coaches until reaching Ferry.

He had known Ferry well in Olympia as he lived across the street from the Milroy home so he explained that the Yakima delegation had Col. Howlett for candidate and Ferry without hesitation told him to stay with his delegation.

In Walla Walla though things were much in turmoil. Milroy found that by stepping aside as candidate for the superior court bench in favor of Carroll B. Graves of Ellensburg the support of Spokane county for Yakima as the state capital could be obtained. A brother of Graves was a prominent member of the Spokane delegation and controlled the city vote and as the attorney for the Seattle Lake Shore & Eastern railroad the building west from Spokane would give Yakima 2000 votes from the railroad workers.

Milroy therefore gave up his aspirations for the superior court bench. Ellensburg had two candidates for the bench, the other being Mitchell Gilliam, who later went to Seattle and a number of years afterwards was elected judge of the superior court in King county and held that office for 27 years.

One of the most effective political speeches ever heard by Milroy was made at the Walla Walla convention by a man from Whitman county, who spoke for the candidacy of Ferry. He told of the uprising of the Nez Perce Indians in the Joseph war and the danger of settlers and how when the whites appealed to him for help, Gov. Ferry telegraphed: "I am coming." The speech was forceful and dramatic and swept the convention for Ferry and he was nominated on the first ballot.

Residents of Yakima worked hard for votes throughout the state at the fall election in 1889, when the question of locating the seat of government for the state was on the ballot. Boosters were sent to all parts of the state and literature setting forth the merits of Yakima was distributed.

Stickers were printed bearing the inscription "North Yakima for Capital" and these were stuck on letters and any place where they would attract attention.

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The votes were scattered too much in the election of 1889 and as no candidate city received a majority vote as required by the choice was carried over into the election of 1892. By that time hard times had struck the state and Yakima boosters were unable to make a strong fight for the capital. Olympia won as western Washington was strong for that location.

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Milroy therefore gave up his aspirations for the superior court as capital park between the Yakima Senior High School and St. Elizabeth hospital were seriously considered as the site for the state capital.

Capt. C.M. Holton who owned the land there prevailed upon the city commission to call it capital park.

The park had been acquired by the city but due to the expense of keeping it up the city let the property go back to the former owners--Yakima Herald, June 13, 1937.

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Sunnyside Canal Story Interests. Several Companies Take control

Before Federal Service.

The Sunnyside canal has an interesting history as several companies differing at least in name had charge of the canal in turn before the reclamation service took it over, R.B. Milroy said in recounting early developments.

The forerunner of the Sunnyside canal was the Konowoc ditch which served a considerable acreage of land between Donald and Buena. The intake was not far from the Sunnyside dam and the ditch extended beyond Buena and covered the ranches of Capt. Robert Dunn, A.B. Weed, Joseph Bartholet, P.J. Flint, Lord, W.P. Sawyer and others.

Paul Schulze, general western land agent for the Northern Pacific railroad was desirous of developing the Yakima valley and brought Walter N. Granger here from Billings, Mont. in June, 1889 to look over the situation. The construction of the Sunnyside canal was first suggested but Granger proposed that water be stored in the lakes and flood waters be impounded and made available for irrigation in the Kittitas and Yakima valleys.

Taking up such an extensive program Schultze, Granger and others organized the Northern Pacific Yakima & Kittitas Irrigation Co. They first drafted application papers by themselves without the assistance of an attorney, but the government returned the papers for lack of proper form.

In the meantime J.B. Reavis and Milroy had become partners and the firm was retained as attorneys for the company. In making application for the construction of storage reservoirs the promoters found the interior department had a number of times decided lakes and living streams could not be used for storage of water.

The promoters proposed that a new application and brief be prepared

asking the department to change its ruling to allow storage of flood waters without interference with the natural flow from lakes and streams.

Reavis believed the department would not change the ruling and would turn down such a proposal and so would do nothing about it. Schultze asked Milroy to prepare the application and brief which he agreed to do provided the engineering force of the Sunnyside canal then in the course of construction would be placed at his disposal.

The brief was first sent to Ham Hall, a consulting engineer who resided in California. Hall approved it and Schultze being greatly pleased sent it to Washington, D.C.

Nothing was heard from it but several months later a new circular was received which permitted storage of flood water in live lakes and streams provided there was no interference with the natural flow. The language used by Milroy in the brief appeared in the circular, which pointed out that the storage would serve to prevent damage from floods.

Since the connection of the Northern Pacific railroad with the Sunnyside canal project had not proved an advantage the name was changed to the Yakima-Kittitas Irrigation Co.

When the Sunnyside canal had been built a distance of 42 miles a celebration was held at the headgate, March 26, 1892. Edward Whitson, later federal judge who was the main speaker, referred to Ft. Konowoc which was built in early days by the settlers as a protection against the Indians during the uprising. The site of the earth fort was not far from the intake of the Sunnyside canal and he began his speech with these words; "We stand on the same ground here today on historic ground."

Miss Dora Allen, daughter of Henry E. Allen, pioneer Yakima druggist and cattleman broke a bottle of champagne on the headgate

as the water was turned into the canal on that occasion.

The officials of the irrigation company built headquarters in Zillah and this building still remains, Milroy said. He recalled driving to Zillah at least once a week on business in connection with the company.

Schultze was a lavish entertainer and spent money freely in all railroad and canal company matters and the most expensive wines were served at the dinners which he planned.

He not only handled the sale of bonds of the irrigation company but the sale of railroad lands.

When the discovery was made that he was short \$300,000 on the company's sale of bonds he committed suicide. The company then went into receivership and the Washington Irrigation Co. was organized and took over the canal.

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The Sunnyside canal bought and used right of way of the Monowoc ditch, so in return for this right of way the owners of lands under the old canal were given a free water right under the new Sunnyside canal. That arrangement was honored when the reclamation service took over the Sunnyside canal--Yakima Herald, June 20, 1937.

Milroy

Residents of Yakima who had moved from the Old Town to the new site wanted the county courthouse close in otherwise it might have been in the second block south of Yakima avenue between Naches avenue and Fourth street, R.B. Milroy, Yakima pioneer said last week.

When the Northern Pacific railroad platted the town this block was not divided into lots but was reserved for the courthouse, Milroy said. In the old town the courthouse was a considerable distance away from the business center where the hotels and law offices were.

When having business at the courthouse people had to go several blocks to the south, nearly as far as the mill and then some distance to the west through sage brush and dust for there ~~were~~ were no sidewalks.

Recalling this the people did not want anything like it in the new town.

The block on Naches avenue was some distance out of town back in 1886. There was a small grocery store on the southeast corner of Yakima and Second street. The rest of the distance was vacant ground. On that account agitation was started for a location closer in.

The county offices had not been moved and to hold court in the old town was inconvenient because no hotels were there. The territorial legislature of 1886 granted Yakima, then North Yakima, a charter and in a separate bill moved the county's seat from the old town to the new.

The passage of the latter bill was handled carefully and without publicity in order not to arouse opposition from residents of the Old Town.

When the county seat was transferred to the new town the necessity arose of moving the courthouse. The citizens picked on the present site and an agreement was reached with the railroad whereby it would give the county a deed for the half block and the county would deed the block on Naches avenue back to the railroad for platting and incorporation into the townsite.

P.J. Flint, chairman of the board of county commissioners was away in the mining country near Cle Elum. The other two commissioners agreed to the deal and when the papers were ready Milroy's brother, Walter Milroy took the papers and rode a horse to the mining camp for Flint to sign.

Flint was not satisfied so came to Yakima but after looking into the situation agreed to the transfers.

The courthouse was a frame building and too big to be moved so it was torn down and erected again on the new site. That required time so in the meantime the offices of the sheriff, clerk of the district court and auditor were in the Milroy and Chapman building and the first court was held in a vacant storeroom in the S.J. Lowe building at the northwest corner of Yakima and First street.

Miss Kate Feurbach was county auditor and acted as deputy clerk of the district court until Richard Strobach was appointed. J.P. Tyler was sheriff. Later he and Miss Feurbach married and started the first abstract office in Yakima.

A high brick foundation was made for the rebuild courthouse which faced on Second street and had a high porch along the front. The building was heated with stoves burning wood which was stored under the porch. Prisoners were used to cut it.

The jail was in the basement with an exercising room for the prisoners. One day they dug away bricks and made a hole to the wood room under the porch through which to escape. The officers heard what was doing so placed themselves outside awaiting the appearance of the prisoners.

Many were caught when sallying forth but a few got over the fence and gave the officers quite a run before they were overtaken. After that the sheriff was careful not to let the prisoners exercise in the room without being watched.

When Yakima wanted a better hotel than the ones moved from the

old town it offered David eWilson of Tacoma a bonus of 35 lots scattered through the town. This he accepted and built the Yakima hotel in 1889. One story has been added since that time.

Mr. and Mrs. Milroy, who were married that year recall attending a dance when the hotel was opened. That was the night of the big Ellensburg fire and they could see the light from it while at the dance.

The disastrous fires in Seattle and Spokane occurred the same year.

Mr. and Mrs. Milroy owned the land which is now Lincoln park and lived on the property. The house was below the bench and an irrigation ditch was at the top of the bench and another along just below.

The land had been taken up by a man by the name of Jones as a timber culture and groves of Lombardy and Silver Leaved poplars were on the place. This gave them some protection against dust storms which other residents of Fruitvale did not enjoy. There were no houses where Modern addition and Fruitvale are now.

Milroy and his brother obtained the property by purchasing a ranch in the Cowiche district acceptable to Mr. Jones and then trading with him.

Alfalfa made a wonderful growth on the new land. Milroy had six or seven acres and made six cuttings in 1890 which was an exceedingly and hot season. Farmers plowed in February and then he cut the first crop of alfalfa May 20 and other cuttings June 20, July 20, August 20, September 20 and October 21.

The stand was heavy and a large amount of hay, fully matured, was obtained each cutting.

That the tonnage to the acre was, Milroy does not remember, but it was large and he sold the hay to a stock man, Sam Cameron, who said it was the largest quantity he had ever seen from that amount of land-- Yakima Herald, June 27, 1937.