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THE SHEEP INDUSTRY IN ARIZONA, 1903

Edited By Frank D. Reeve

Introduction

The American Shepherd's Bulletin was one of several titles for a journal devoted to the sheep and wool industry in the United States after the Civil War.¹ A reporter under the pseudonym of "The Young Observer" has not been identified,"² but his recorded descriptions of the sheep industry in the western states during the early years of the 1900's provide a valuable glimpse of life in the West during the days of the open range. The portions devoted to New Mexico were annotated by William J. Parish for publication.³ The articles on Arizona, a johnny-come-lately in the sheep industry, are herein presented for the readers who do not have access to the original source.

Prior to the American Civil War Mexican sheepmen failed to maintain their occupation of the grasslands in southern Arizona because of Apache opposition. After the war when American military pressure brought the Indians under control, and even before that was actually accomplished, venturesome men once more began moving their flocks into Arizona.

"The first sheep reintroduced after the Apache outbreaks by a Caucasian was a flock of seven hundred belonging to Juan Candelaria, which he drove from Cubero, New Mexico, to a ranch site selected by him a few miles south of the present town of Concho, in Apache County, in 1866." The term "Caucasian" is essential, of course, because the Navahos had long grazed sheep in the northeastern corner of Arizona. Other flocks soon crossed the Territorial boundary line, utilizing the grass in the upper stretches of the Little Colo-

1. For a brief discussion see William J. Parish, editor, "Sheep Industry in New Mexico, 1902-03." *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, 37:201-213 (July, 1962)

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Op. Cit.*

rado River Valley around Springerville, Arizona, and the White Mountains.⁴

During the 1860's a few flock masters moved sheep southward from Utah toward the Grand Canyon. In 1871, Jacob Hamblin crossed a flock over the Colorado River at Lee's Ferry and herded it to the valley of the Little Colorado. Sheep from California temporarily sampled the grass in the western part of the Territory, then in 1868 James Baker settled his flock in the Chino Valley. The movement of sheep from the west was stimulated by severe droughts in the Golden State during the early part of the 1860's. In the next decade, sheep continued to move into Arizona from all directions. Mexicans crossed the boundary into the upper San Pedro River Valley. Mormons moved in there with a few dairy herds, and, to make the pattern more sociable, some Texas and California cattlemen utilized grass in that area.

The early sheep drives were marked by a variety of hazards. Despite the presence of the military, there was still some possibility of loss from the Apaches. Bad weather, the wrong type of forage, and scarcity of water when crossing the desert country contributed to the difficulties of the sheepman. The ferry owner levied a toll on his pocketbook, although there was at least one instance when the operator was entitled a gentleman:

Another sheepman, Peter Filance, of Prescott, Arizona, while trailing 4,000 sheep from California, had to utilize a ferry over the Colorado River, whose operator was a keen judge of what the traffic would bear. After being charged \$800 for use of the toll-road and ferry, Filance lodged a complaint, protesting that "this was more than sheepmen could afford in their efforts to settle this country." Whereupon the gentlemanly operator, as Mr. Filance says, "voluntarily paid us back \$400".⁵

The arrival of the railroad hastened the development of

4. Bert Haskett, "History of the Sheep Industry in Arizona." *ARIZONA HISTORICAL REVIEW*, 7:19 (July, 1936)

5. *Arizona Miner*, June 25, 1875, quoted in C. W. Towne and E. N. Wentworth, *Shepherd's Empire*, pp. 169-170 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1945).

the sheep industry. The Southern Pacific from the west and the Sante Fe from the east provided an inlet for stocking the range in greater numbers and an outlet for transporting the woolies to market. An estimate of numbers in 1890 credited the Territory with about 700,000 sheep. When the Young Observer traveled the country he saw a picture of a pioneer but stable industry.

*The "Young Observer" In Arizona**

Sheep Breeding and Sheep Men in the Territory—Interviews
with Sheep Men—Facts of Interest Regarding Arizona
Sheep and Wool

The recent struggle of Arizona for statehood⁶ has directed the attention of a great many to that territory, who are wondering whether she is really capable of taking care of her own affairs or not.

The sheep men as a rule are not particularly interested one way or the other, but they are interested in the forest reserve question, and vitally, too.

Mr. Morgan, of Shou Lo [Show Low],⁷ Arizona, speaking of this matter, said:

"It is just this way, my friend, I contend that matters are

* (From Our Traveling Staff Correspondence) *The American Shepherd's Bulletin*, vol. 8, no. 6, June, 1903.

6. Congress created Arizona Territory in 1863, but statehood was not achieved until 1912. The House of Representatives approved an omnibus bill for Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma in 1902, but a Senate filibuster led by Albert J. Beveridge killed statehood for the time being. For a brief account based on his doctoral dissertation see Robert W. Larson, "Statehood for New Mexico, 1888-1912," *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, 37:161-200. Cf. Rufus Kay Wyllys, *Arizona: The History of a Frontier State*. Hobson & Kerr, Phoenix, Arizona, 1950.

7. The name Show Low came from a card game. Corydon E. Corley, who served as a scout with General Crook, married an Apache, and settled here in 1875 with a partner named Marion Clark. They decided to break up the partnership and played a card game called Seven-Up wherein Corley finally exclaimed "Show low it is," and won possession of the ranch. A post office with the name of Corydon was established in August 19, 1880, and Mr. Corley was appointed post master. Will C. Barnes, *Arizona Place Names*. Revised and enlarged by Byrd Granger. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1960. Sheldon H. Dike, *The Territorial Post Offices of Arizona*, Albuquerque, 1953.

radically wrong when one man in charge of the government forest reserves holds in his hand the power to either let us continue on our peaceable and prosperous way or, by his edict, put us off our accustomed grazing grounds and thereby ruin us. It is bad for the man thus placed in such arbitrary power, as it holds up to him inducements for bribery, favoritism and corruption. It is correspondingly bad for the sheep man, as he is continually 'walking on thin ice,' which he has no assurance will hold up longer than the present. From a wool grower's and a mutton raiser's point of view it is a **DECIDEDLY WRONG AND DANGEROUS** condition of affairs."

Said one man the other day: "I have improvements on my ranch, which is located on the reserve, which amount to over \$3,000 and should I be denied permit to graze my sheep on the reserve these same improvements would be practically worthless and I would see the fruit of 29 years' hard labor swept away. Arizona, except in a very few favored sections, is a grazing and mining territory."

If the government dam is built in the Tonto basin,⁸ it will put many acres under profitable cultivation but there will still be thousands of acres here fit only for the grazing of sheep and cattle. Sheep do better and

BRING SURER DIVIDENDS on the investment than do cattle in Arizona.

Where you find one cattle man who has made money in Arizona you find a dozen or more who broke up in the cattle business.

On the contrary, where you find one sheep man who broke up, you find a dozen or more who are prosperous.

There is but one conclusion to draw; it is this: Arizona is a sheep man's country, and such let it remain. The weeds and grasses, which start as early as February 1, down on the desert around Phoenix, attract the sheep man, who drive their sheep down from the northern and central Arizona ranges to the desert. When it rains, his sheep are shorn by

8. The Tonto Basin lies north of Roosevelt Dam on the Salt River at the junction with Tonto Creek.

the last of March, and by the 25th of April, or May 1st, are all fat, sold and made into mutton.

On the contrary, when it does not rain, he often returns to the northern ranges after lambing with less sheep and lambs than he had sheep to go down with.

AN EXCEPTIONAL YEAR. This year, according to Hutchinson, commonly called "Hutch" by the sheep men, was an exceptional one, the very best in his remembrance. The per cent of lambs saved this year was in most cases around 100, some reporting as high as 112 per cent of a lamb crop marked out. Of course this year is a record breaker and not an average.

Wool brings a good price, mutton a good price, and feed is excellent, a condition, says Hugh Campbell, which does not occur more than twice in a lifetime.

There are two things which Hugh is authority on. One is New Mexico wethers and the other is the game of sluff.⁹

When Hugh is too tired to play sluff there is something radically wrong. It is a curious sight to old cow men to go into Cordes station now and see the place filled with sheep men boarding with Mr. Corder, who some dozen years ago was a confirmed cow man.

Now there is one of the best sheep dips in Arizona located there, as well as shearing pens, all of which turn the old man in quite a nice little revenue.

The plains and hills from Phoenix up to Mayer¹⁰ are at this time of year (April)

ONE MASS OF FLOWERS AND GREEN WEEDS. A sheep need not go ten rods to get all it wants to eat. The air is filled with the perfume of flowers. The stillness is unbroken save by the call of some old ewe to her straying lamb. The herders lie

9. ¿Quien sabe?

10. After construction of the railroad the name of this site was changed from Antelope Station to Cordes Station because the former name had already been applied to another railroad station. John H. Cordes was appointed post master when the office was established on June 9, 1886. It was discontinued on November 15, 1944. *Arizona Place Names*. Dike, *op. cit.*, states that the Cordes Post Office was discontinued on January 31, 1912.

under some brush and sleep through the middle of the day. All is peace, contentment and prosperity in a year like this.

"But," says Bill McIntire,¹¹ "it isn't always like this. If you had been with the Frenchman and me when we were snowed in last winter, you would have wished you had never seen a sheep. The Frenchman would have sold out his whole herd of California ewes for a dollar a head and been glad to get that.

"Yes, and when your sheep have eaten all the grass off the reserve and you are waiting for a permit to go on, and your sheep are starving by the hundreds, you see your hard earned money melting like snow—money which you have lived away out in the sheep camp, away from civilization and home, to get—then it is that you wish you were in some other business."

"Yes," says Lockett, "you fellows see us when we are in town, fat and sassy, but then we are at our best. Whiskey tastes good to us then, but catch us out on the desert, with no water, no grass and everything seemingly going wrong, and you will see different men entirely."

"Yes," says Hutch, "this year we will take a trip back East, spend a good spell down on the coast, but maybe next year we will be, as the saying is, here, all in, and then some."

"Well," says Colin Campbell, "I have driven down to the desert many times and made good lambings, too, better than others did under like conditions, but I don't go down any more—it is

TOO DANGEROUS AN EXPERIMENT at times. Perkins went down with the wethers this year and it seems as though he never would get away from Phoenix. Well, Phoenix is a nice town to stay in, but I would like to see him up here at Winslow about this time to help shearing and selling the wool."

11. Joe Mayer located here about 1882. The post office was established January 11, 1884, with Sarah B. Mayer serving as post mistress. *Arizona Place Names*. John and Lillian Theobald, *Arizona Territory Post Offices and Post Masters*. Phoenix: The Arizona Historical Foundation, 1961. William McIntire was a Coconino County sheepman sometime after 1891. Haskett, *op. cit.*, 7:3.

And so it goes as I sit around among the old timers, men who have practically spent their lives in the business here.

Are they contented? ask you.

I do not know but from the way they hang to the business and from the enthusiasm they show in their work I would answer, yes.

Many people think of Arizona as a desert, but if those people should stop off at Flagstaff, they might think that they were in the pine woods of Maine, or upper peninsula of Michigan.

There is one of the largest lumber and box factories here in the United States. It employs hundreds of hands and ships its product all over the world.

THE PEOPLE OF ARIZONA are, as a whole, a prosperous, well educated and hustling class of people. They are a people who would do well in almost any state and under almost any conditions.

To the old timer there is no such thing as failure. He is always hopeful, and if he has not made a stake he is going to do so in the near future.

The American element predominates here but it is the same here as it is in every place in the Southwest. They employ Spanish herders almost entirely and pay them \$30 and board. The cost of running a ewe herd a year is estimated at 70 to 75 cents a head. The sheep shorn around Phoenix shear from five to nine pounds per head. Those around Winslow shear from eight to 10 pounds per head. Around Ash Fork and Seligman they shear seven to eight pounds per head.

The weight of fleece and shrinkage varies from 60 to 75 per cent, according to the class of sheep and where they are run. Those run in the mountains all winter, show a whiter, cleaner fleece than those run on the plains and their wool shrinks at least 5 to 10 per cent less.

WOOL IN ARIZONA brought this year from 12 to 15½ cents a pound, according to quality and condition. Two-year-old wethers were nearly all contracted before April 20 at prices

ranging from \$3 to \$3.50 per head, grass fed. Some have gone from Cordes, Arizona, which were pronounced by the buyers as equal, or better, than native corn fed stuff. The mutton fattened on the weeds of the desert is certainly delicious, as the writer can testify from personal experience out in the shearing camps.

THE NUMBER OF SHEEP kept in Arizona is comparatively small but those running them are as prosperous or more so than their neighbors in New Mexico.

Arizona has two outlets for her mutton, one to the California coast, the other east. This makes quite a little difference in prices and the attitude of buyers.

COLIN CAMPBELL. During my stay in Winslow I became better acquainted with Colin Campbell, Arizona's veteran sheep man. It is generally conceded by those who claim to be a judge of wool that the Campbell clip is the best clip of fine wool in Arizona. The sheep have been bred in the same line for 27 years without any intermixture of blood other than Merino or Delaine. Mr. Campbell also raises from 1,000 to 1,200 bucks each year which he sells in southern Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona.

Those who have used rams from this flock pronounce them very fine and capable of enduring any kind of weather or feed that any other sheep can. This clip of wool is a strictly fine territory and a very even and desirable clip. When it comes to the breeding of sheep and the raising of wool, Mr. Colin Campbell does not have to take a back seat for anyone.

OTHER SHEEP MEN. The other sheep men who make their homes in Winslow are Mr. Woods, Mr. Perkins, Mr. Sawyer, Mr. Hart and Mr. Bly.¹² All of these gentlemen are good

12. Hart was a pioneer sheepman in Coconino County after 1881. Haskett, *op. cit.*, p. 23. He is mentioned in the weekly *Arizona Miner*, December 21, 1877, as quoted in E. N. Wentworth, *American Sheep Trails*, p. 247. Ames: The Iowa State College Press, 1948. He served in the Territorial House of Representatives, 16th Legislature, Apache County, 1891. George H. Kelly, *Legislative History, 1864-1912*. 1926.

E. S. Perkins is listed as a Territorial Council member from Apache County, 1901. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

Mrs. E. S. Perkins is mentioned as a sheep owner in Apache County after 1891. Haskett, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

sheep men and from all appearances are making a success at the business. Mr. Woods is also quite heavily interested in business blocks in Winslow. Mr. Sawyer was engaged in the general merchandise business, but quit to devote his entire time to the sheep business. Mr. Bly was running last year over 6,000 head, but on account of the uncertainty of the forest reserve range, he sold out all but one herd. Mr. Hart runs one herd of sheep and has much of the Campbell blood in his sheep.

Taking the sheep men of Arizona as a whole, they are a whole-souled lot of fellows and exceptionally good business men and managers.

Perkins and Campbell are mentioned as sheepmen in *Ibid.*, p. 48.

Sawyer-Otondo Sheep Company of Winslow, Arizona, is mentioned in *ibid.*, p. 47.

Jay X. Wood was a pioneer sheepman of Coconino County after 1881. *Ibid.*, p. 29. I have no information on Ely.