

ADVENTURES OF EARLY EMIGRANTS

Culminating weeks of planning on their little farms just outside of Meadow Grove, Nebraska in the winter of 1907 -1908, Harvey Cook and Joe Krivanek sold out; and made a drawing for land in a desert in Southern Idaho.

After their auction sale they hired an emigrant car from the Union Pacific and headed west on the train, leaving their families behind. They would be sent for later.

The car housed two men, farm machinery, household goods, a cow, twelve chickens, a team of horses, and many other things which would be needed.

It was a home on wheels.

They rode, slept, ate, and tended the animals; but were leading a much different life for several days.

On the 20th day of March, 1908, Joe and Harvey, driving the old gray team of mares, hitched to a lumber wagon of Eastern make, which had wheels four inches closer together than the Western make of wagons, on which was loaded some household furniture, the hens with a rooster, some hay and a sack of grain, left ~~for~~ Twin Falls. A cow was hitched behind the wagon. Twin Falls was the town to which the two men, and George Childs, who is now the Twin Falls County Assessor, had come west in their emigrant car from Meadow Grove.

They were bound for Jerome, Idaho, a place they had heard so much about, but had never seen.

As they approached the town, if it could be called a town at that time, they met a man riding south on the road now known as Highway 93. But then it was called "The Pole Line" road, because it followed the only electric line coming into Jerome. The man they met wore a pair of leather pants. His name was McGowan. But to Harvey and Joe he was forever called "Leather Britches".

Upon arriving in Jerome, about four P. M. they asked J. M. Hale, a real estate agent, for the location of the land drawn under Choice 6. It is now the land just across the canal one mile west of Jerome. It is the eighty acres north of the highway upon which the depot is now located and includes the area south of the highway where the Jerome Livestock Commission sale yard is located.

They found the location and camped there for the night, right at the place where the house north of the road, and just west of the canal, now stands.

They unloaded the wagon and fed the cow and horses. Their next question was - where do we sleep? Being tenters from the Midwest they had to have some place of shelter; so they turned the wagon-box over, and they crawled under and went to sleep. This in spite of the howls of many coyotes which roamed that vast desert of sagebrush, which reached as far as the eye could see.

The boys built the house I just mentioned above. It was the first farmhouse on the Northside Tract. My husband and I, and our four children, moved in on June 6th, 1908.

My sister, Mrs. Joe Krivanek, and her twenty month old son, Kenneth, and I, with my four children, Vera, 8, Stella, 6, Marble 4, and Jesse, 2 arrived in Shoshone on April 3rd. We were met by our husbands who were very glad to see us after having had a long taste of bachelor life. Of course they had been doing a man's work, and also a woman's housework with no house.

When they met us at Shoshone they had each invested in a new Western hat. Western styles were so different from Nebraska styles that we didn't even know them!

On our way from Shoshone to Jerome, behind a team that could make but three miles an hour, we were told of the many good, and also the many bad things we were to experience in our new homes. One of the things we had a hard time to get acquainted with was the way they spoke of money. Everything seemed to be two-bits, four-bits, or six-bits. Another was to be aware of whom we spoke to, as there were lots of men, but very few women.

Shortly after we moved into our home we put up a clothes line. We were almost at once asked daily whether we would perform laundry service. I well remember one fine looking man who told me that he was an engineer, but I turned him down because I thought he was on the railroad and his clothes would probably be greasy and dirty. At the very first when we arrived in Jerome, and before the house built, the men rented tents, and pitched them on the lot where our Post Master Hartshorn now lives. The rains often leaked through holes in the canvas, and we had to put pans on the beds at night.

Sagebrush came to within ten feet of our tent, and we often had to kill rattlesnakes close-by.

We had brought chickens from the farm, and kept them near the tents. One night we heard squawks by the old hen, and we ran out to see what was the matter. We never saw her again, as the coyote ran off to eat his meal, leaving the little chicks behind.

There was no grocery store, and no railroad when we first got to Jerome. There was no irrigation water for over a year. The Jerome State Bank was housed in the building now occupied by the Connor Radio Shop. The restaurant was located in the building now occupied by the Northside Hatchery. The rooming house was located in the building now occupied by Crane Plumbing Co. The Land Office, which has been torn down, was located where the Tower Motel now stands.

The Land Office was the meeting place for all sorts of entertainment, including whittling contests or what-have-you. There was a saloon where the Kaiser Frazier garage now is. The Real Estate ^{office} was on the corner just east of the Thorpe Motor Co. building.

The above buildings constituted all of the business section of Jerome when we arrived.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe Krivanek became parents of the first baby born in Jerome; a daughter born on June 19, 1908. Jerome residents chose Jerome for her name, and presented her with a purse of \$100, plus giving her a nice residential lot. Later, when the elevator began the manufacture of flour, it was named JEROMA FLOUR, and that name is still spreading a fine product throughout the west.

Mrs. Krivanek and myself were the first Mothers with children in this new little town. And, ~~Mrs.~~ and Mrs. Dan Udegraff were the first couple to be married in Jerome.

There are many other things I could tell, which will always be of interest, but time will not permit me to tell.

Our 40 years of continual residence in Jerome is proof from us that there could be lots of places worse to live than Jerome, in the great State of Idaho.

By Ella M. Cook
Ella M. Cook - March 1948