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A HISTORY OF SHEEP INDUSTRY IN ARIZONA

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Sheep Play Important Part in Early History of the State—Are Well Adapted to Arizona Conditions—Future Bright for the Sheepman.

DOWN through almost four hundred years, the plaintive ba-a-a of the lamb has been heard on the mesas and the mountains of Arizona. Sheep raising in the Southwest has a record that for age, picturesqueness, sheer romance and history, is shared by no other industry in the United States today, except the range cattle business. Marco de Niza in 1539 reported that sheep were in the possession of the natives of Cibola, but he was probably mistaken. Friar Estivan in the same year reported that no sheep were seen except the "big-horn." It is possible that de Niza saw the fleeces of wild sheep the Indians had killed and wrongly thought that they possessed sheep. Coronado on his march to the Seven Cities in 1540 brought bands of sheep and herds of cattle to furnish food for his men. It is probable that some of these animals were lost, stolen or traded to the Indians, and so, for the first time sheep were introduced into what is now Arizona.

Following the early Spanish explorers, missionary priests were sent into the land of the Hopis to convert the savages, and they brought with them practical gifts of sheep, cattle and horses. Early in the period of contact with the Spaniards, the Indians commenced using wool to make blankets, utilizing a knowledge of weaving that had come to them from the Rio Grande Pueblos.

For the next 150 years, there is little known of the sheep industry except that around the missions established by the Spanish fathers, stock raising was encouraged. In 1775, Padre Font wrote of the Pimas: "They own some large sheep whose wool is good." The Pimas lived in southern Arizona and their sheep were probably brought in from the older settlements further south.

Protected by peaceful Pueblo Indians of the Rio Grande Valley in New Mexico, sheep raising had an early development there. Their flocks



Sheep have been a source of profit to Arizona for three hundred years.

were often raided by the Indians from the west and undoubtedly they furnished many additions to the flocks of the Navajos. In 1850, a military inspector estimated that the Indians had stolen from the New Mexican Pueblos no less than 47,300 sheep in eighteen months.

That droughts caused the sheepmen trouble and loss in the years gone by as they do today is attested by the figures gathered by Padres Fernandez and Garcia, who wrote that in 1780, no rain having fallen for three seasons, the Hopis lost all but 300 of their 30,000 sheep. These figures show, too, that sheep raising was an industry of considerable extent with the Indians even at that early date.

The wool growing industry of the Indians had grown to such proportions that in 1846 the Mormons built a woolen mill run by water power at Tuba City on the Moencopie Wash, about seventy miles northwest of Oraibi with the idea of making use of the wool of the Hopis and Navajos. The Indians did not take to the plan, however, evidently preferring to use their own hand looms as little wool was brought in and the venture was a failure. The ruins of the old stone

mill stand today, a relic of Arizona's first woolen mill.

During the gold rush to California, Carson and other pioneers drove sheep from the Rio Grande Valley across Arizona to help feed the Argonauts. Bartlett wrote that in 1852 Indians near Yuma stole a band of 4217 sheep owned by John White, which were being trailed from Sonora to California.

Up to about 1875 the Indians were the principal sheep-owners, there being few white-owned sheep. Prior to this time sheep-raising was too hazardous an occupation due to the depredations of the Apaches. In 1874, Feliz Scott brought a band of sheep from New Mexico into the Little Colorado River Valley and the next year some Navajo sheep were taken by Frank Hunt into Yavapai County. It is thought that in 1876 a man named Robinson drove 2000 sheep into the Tonto Basin.

John Clark of Flagstaff is regarded as being the pioneer sheepman of Arizona. In 1875, he started from Kern County, California with 5000 head but lost about half his band in a snow storm before reaching Arizona. He crossed the Colorado at Hardy's Ferry on December 7th and went into win-

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ter quarters on the Big Sandy. The following spring he found permanent range in what is now Coconino County, near Bill Williams mountain. Soon afterward his neighbor William Ashurst brought in a band from Nevada.

Early days of the sheep industry were marked by incessant war with the cattlemen and with the roving sheep bands. Wandering bands from New Mexico coming to graze on the summer grasses of Arizona were turned back at the Cañon Diablo by force. The long continued quarrel between the sheepmen and the cattlemen provided an interesting study for the psychologist as well as for the economist. They had little in common. There was a difference in habits and nature, and often nationality. The shepherd was a Basque or a Mexican, used to the monotony of his life, often separated from humanity for months at a stretch with only his dog and his sheep for company. Happy when lying on a sunny hillside where he could watch his flock and hear the continuous ba-a-a-a of the lambs and the anxious call of their mothers. Sheep are gregarious, their very life depending upon their staying together, and they are nomadic, following the grass with the seasons.

The cowpuncher was generally an American, of a nervous type that didn't like to "stay put." His cattle ranged in a more or less definite district. A cow taken a hundred miles away from the range she was born on would go back to it. As he couldn't understand the shepherd and considered him an inferior person—he hated him intensely. The shepherd, faithful to his flock and to his employer, armed himself and stood his ground sullenly.

There was some trouble encountered by the sheepman when the northern Arizona sheep were first driven down south into the Tonto Basin and the valleys of central Arizona to winter. When the forest service established driveways for the passage of sheep through the newly created National Forests, the opposition to the move was strong.

The sheep industry finally assumed large proportions. By 1883 there were estimated to be 680,000 sheep in the Territory with a value of \$2,380,000. These figures do not include Indian-owned sheep. The flocks were being improved by the use of fine Merino,



Arizona sheep wintering under the ideal conditions of the Salt River Valley.

Southdown and Cotswold rams and even then Arizona wool was noted for its length of staple and whiteness.

From the borders of Utah and Mexico and from the line of New Mexico almost to the Colorado river, Arizona is one vast grazing ground. It is estimated that 65,000 square miles, an area as large as all New England, is adapted only to the grazing of livestock. Sheep raising is confined almost wholly to the northern part of the plateau country and to the mountains and valleys of the central and eastern part of the state. The early days saw countless numbers of cattle and sheep grazed and it was thought the native grasses would always furnish plenty of feed. Over-grazing and droughts killed off many of the native plants but Arizona has a wealth of varieties of grasses and plants that is excelled by no other state. It is interesting to note that the seeds of alfalaria, which often transforms the desert into a green garden in the spring, was brought in from California in the wool of sheep trailed overland. Here it found a home among the desert plants and is one of the principal sources of forage during the later winter and early spring months.

Sheep are on the increase in Arizona. Due to financial and drought conditions, a number of cattle outfits have gone out of business in the past few years and sheep are taking their place on many ranges. There are now approximately one million two hundred thousand sheep, both white and Indian-owned. About 80

per cent are sheep of Merino origin and the remainder half-blood. Pure bred Rambouillet and Merino rams have been used for years and the wool from this state is noted for its length of staple, uniformity, and whiteness. Last year the wool clip amounted to six million four hundred thousand pounds (6,400,000).

A hundred thousand ewes lamb during November and December on the green alfalfa pastures of the Salt River Valley, at a time when sheepmen of the northern states are concerned with snow and blizzards. These lambs go to eastern markets about Easter time and command a premium there.

It is a long way from the time of Coronado and the Spanish fathers to the present day when Arizona ranks among the leading wool-producing states—a time that has been filled with romance and history and unbelievable hardships—of prosperous times and lean years. While economically the industry has changed entirely, the herder still lies on the sunny hillside and hears the plaintive ba-a-a-a of the lambs all day and into the night.

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Nearly all garden and truck crops are attacked by slugs. They attack the plants mainly at the surface of the soil. They may feed down some distance below the ground and also injure the heads of cabbage and lettuce. The ugly feeding punctures they make afford a ready entrance for decay and often whole plantings are ruined.