

Utah—Where the Society for Range Management Was Organized

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Utah was chosen as the site for the first meeting of the Society for Range Management, which was organized with Joseph Pechanec as the first president, at the Newhouse Hotel in Salt Lake City in January, 1948. The 192 charter members who were in attendance brought forth a lusty, vibrant organization that has grown and prospered over the years. It was born after a gestation period of many years, during which replies to a questionnaire showed that 495 of the 505 rangers questioned favored formation of such an organization. It was named the American Society of Range Management and became the Society for Range Management in 1970.

Utah was also chosen as the location for the 14th annual meeting of the Society, which was held in the same Newhouse Hotel in February, 1961. It was here the Range Conservation postage stamp was issued in connection with this meeting. Stamp Artist Rudolph Wendelin participated in the meeting and signed his autograph on hundreds of first day issued stamps and Society banquet programs which were decorated with the range conservation stamp. Several cowboy television celebrities provided entertainment, one of which was Sheb Woolley, who rode into the crowded hotel ballroom on the horse that Bill Hurst had led up the marble steps into the lobby of the hotel.

And now—the next annual meeting of the Society returns to Salt Lake City next February. This time we'll meet at the famous Hotel Utah. The old Newhouse was brought down by a demolition blast last year.

It is fitting that the Society's first meeting was in Utah, which has a rich background in livestock and grazing history. The economy of early Utah was based on the livestock industry, and it is still of major importance in the wealth and well-being of the state. Cattle and sheep continue to contribute much to the people, and the management of the ranges on which they graze is of great importance.

The livestock grazing history of Utah has some fascinating episodes. Some of the nuggets of Utah's grazing history are as follows:

- Miles Goodyear built Fort Buenaventura near the present city of Ogden prior to the time the Mormons first came to Utah in July, 1847. On one of the trips to Santa Fe he brought back livestock, which he grazed near his fort. He was not happy when the large number of Mormons settled near his fort, so he sold the fort and most of his livestock to Captain James Brown on November 25, 1847, for \$1,950 in gold. Included in the sale were 75 cattle, 75 goats, 12 sheep, 6

horses, and a cat. This was the first sale of livestock in Utah.

Miles Goodyear went to California where horses were selling for from \$2 to \$4 per head. He purchased a band of horses in 1848 and trailed them 2,000 miles to Ft. Leavenworth, Kans., and St. Joseph, Mo. The horse market there turned bad, so instead of selling them as he intended, he wintered them on the Missouri River bottoms. Discovery of gold in California improved the demand for horses there, so next spring he drove the horses back to California, where he sold them at a good profit after trailing them 4,000 miles. He trailed the horses from Independence, Mo., to Sutters Fort, Calif., in 54 days.

- The first substantial amount of livestock that came to Utah was brought by the second company of Mormon pioneers who left Winter Quarters, 6 miles from Omaha, Neb., on July 4, 1847, with 556 wagons in the company. They brought with them 358 sheep, 887 cattle, 2,213 oxen, 35 hogs, 124 horses, and 716 chickens. The company was led by Parley P. Pratt, who organized the company into units for grazing and herding purposes. They encountered extreme difficulties on the trip to Salt Lake City, where they arrived on September 19, 1847.

- Brigham Young, President of the Mormon Church, took possession of Antelope Island in Great Salt Lake soon after the Utah pioneers arrived in Utah, to be used as a herd ground for the livestock owned by the church. Bryant Stringham, who was in charge of the island, insisted that every horse be corralled at least once each year. They were looked after, handled, and broken by a top crew of horsemen.

There were upwards of a thousand horses on the island, the finest horses in the West. The high point of the year was the horse roundup time. In 1860 President Brigham Young visited the island and brought all of his clerks and some other guests for a three-day outing. He invited some of the most noted horsemen in the territory to participate. They came mounted on the best horses to take part in the roundup. The show at roundup time was the occasion for a celebration. The hazing and racing large bunches of horses into the corral required skilled horsemanship. There the roping, branding, and treatment of the wild bunch required the assistance of expert horsemen and provided excitement to the visitors. There was also feasting, and music for the entertainment of the guests.

Antelope Island became overstocked with grazing animals, so Brigham Young sent large numbers of horses and cattle south to new range near the Sevier River. The Mormon

Bishop at Holden was put in charge of them. The area where they were grazed is still called the Church Hills, part of which is on the Fishlake National Forest.

- In 1855 Brigham Young called on a number of families to move their livestock out to new ranges, so the Bennion families moved their cattle to Rush Valley. The range in the south end of Rush Valley was considered to be of top quality, so it was loaded up with cattle, sheep, and horses. By 1875 this range was so badly depleted that cows were calving only every other year, and both cattle and sheep were being moved in the fall to winter in the lower valleys farther west. Hyrum Bennion reported that Rush Valley was considered to be the best range in Utah as they could stay in one place all the year round, but, by 1875 it was all "et out" and they had to move their cattle to Castle Valley.

- When the Mormon pioneers arrived in Utah, the forage for their livestock appeared to be almost inexhaustible. But the principles of good range management had not been learned by the settlers, and they abused the range. Grazing problems became acute. Elder Orson Hyde, one of the leaders of the church, gave the following report in the semi-annual general conference of the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City on October 7, 1865, 18 years after the first settlers arrived:

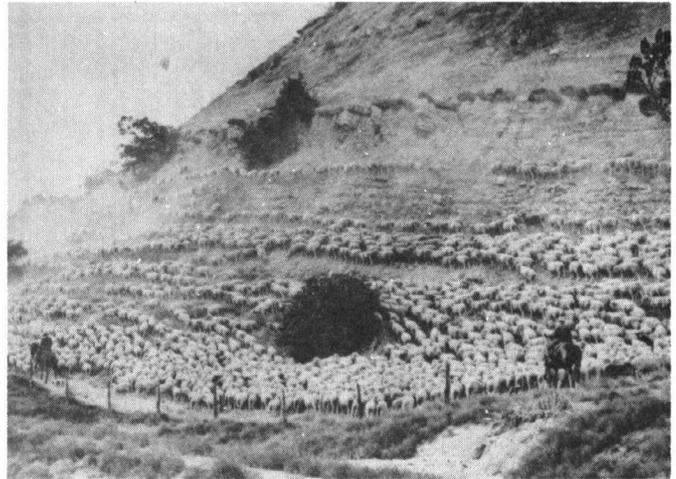
I find the longer we live in these valleys that the range is becoming more and more destitute of grass; the grass is not only eaten up by the great amount of stock that feed upon it, but they tramp it out by the very roots, and where grass once grew luxuriantly, there is now nothing but the desert weed, and hardly a spear of grass is to be seen. Between here and the mouth of Emigration Canyon, when our brethren, the pioneers first landed in '47, there was an abundance of grass over all those benches; they were covered with it like a meadow. There is now nothing but the desert weed, the sage, the rabbitbrush, and such like plants that make very poor feed for stock. Being cut short of our range in the way we have been, and accumulating as we are, we have nothing to feed them with in the winter and they perish. There is not profit in this . . . Hence in my labors I have exerted an influence, as far as I have been able, to cultivate less land in grain and secure to ourselves meadows that we might have our hay in the time and in the season thereof . . . in the present condition of the range we cannot indulge in the hope of raising such large herds of stock as we have done heretofore; but we have to keep about what will serve up and take care of them well.

- Texas longhorn cattle were brought to Utah in sizeable numbers in the 1860's and 1870's. Some were marketed in Utah and others were wintered here en route to other markets. The movement of Texas cattle to Utah apparently started in 1866 when John Hamilton Morgan and a friend contracted to drive a herd of Texas longhorns from Missouri to Salt Lake City. They arrived on December 23, 1866, the first of thousands to come from Texas.

Brown's Hole in northeastern Utah was a favorite wintering spot for Texas cattle. In October, 1869, 2,200 Texas cattle were driven into the Hole to winter before going on to the California market.

In 1870 as many as 100,000 cattle were driven from Texas, about 8,000 of which came to Utah. George T. and William D. Reynolds drove 900 longhorns north to Cheyenne, then west to Salt Lake City. James Daugherty was a leading drover for two decades, moving from 1,000 to 4,000 cattle from Texas each year, many of which came to Utah.

The second Powell expedition exploring the Colorado River discovered on June 8, 1871, the temporary headquarters of the Harrell Brothers on the Green River. They were wintering 2,000 head of Texas longhorns on the trail to Cali-



Sheep trailing from summer range on their way to the desert for winter.

fornia. The Powell party traded some of their flour to these cattlemen for fresh beef.

- The Deseret Livestock Company is an outstanding outfit which was organized in 1889 by a group of sheepmen who believed they could operate their grazing business best on a cooperative basis. None of the stockholders owned their grazing land, but they felt they should do so to insure proper management of their operations. They incorporated in 1891 with John H. Moss, president, James I. Atinson, vice president, and Orrin P. Hatch as secretary, and a group of directors. All of the officers but one worked for the company. There were ninety-five stockholders at the time of incorporation, and this grew to 250 in 1928, when the company had a national reputation as a good outfit. It has survived 95 years in the business.

The name 'Deseret' comes from the Book of Mormon and signifies industry. Early church influence was shown by the practice of the company to pay ten percent of the profits to the Mormon Church as tithing before the dividends were distributed to the stockholders.

In 42 years the company bought 235,740 acres of land in six counties and two states, Utah and Wyoming. Many of the stockholders filed on homesteads, and when they got title to the land, donated it to the company to enlarge its holdings and strengthen the company.

The operation was entirely with sheep until 1901, when the Echo Land and Livestock cattle outfit was purchased. Cattle were originally intended to supplement the sheep operation, but over the years cattle numbers increased so that they eventually became more important than sheep.

Sheep numbers peaked when 60,000 mature sheep were run. On some occasions when lambs were shipped, full trainloads of Deseret Livestock lambs were shipped to eastern markets. Cattle numbers ranged from 3,000 to 5,500 head, but peaked at 8,000 head.

Sheep were wintered on the desert range in Skull Valley and trailed to their summer range through the streets of Grantsville and Salt Lake City until arrangements were made to ship them from the North Salt Lake stockyards.

In the late 1940's Ken Garff, David Freed and David Robinson began buying out other stockholders. These men gained control of the company, which they operated successfully for many years. In 1974 Joseph Hotung purchased a large part of the company's land and livestock in Northeastern



Counting sheep permitted to graze on the Wasatch National Forest.

Utah. The Garff-Freed-Robinson partnership retained the Naponset Ranch with over 30,000 acres of land, winter permits for 2,500 cattle, and 26,000 acres of Heiner Canyon for summer grazing. In 1983 Hotung sold his holdings, which were renamed The Desert Land and Livestock Company.

- John Albert "Al" Scorup was one of Utah's outstanding cattlemen who built a cattle empire in the wild, remote, inaccessible canyon country of San Juan County. Although he was reared in Salina, where he retained a cattle operation, he envisioned the possibilities for success raising cattle in San Juan.

In the early 1890's, Al, with his brother Jim, leased 300 cattle in Salina, trailed them 300 miles to the White Canyon country, and started in the cow business. They ran into many problems—shortage of water, competition from Texas cattlemen, and large herds of wild horses that ate up the feed and damaged the range. Al and Jim spent many days shooting horses. Lions and wolves killed calves. "Old Bigfoot" was a wolf that killed 150 calves one fall.

For years longhorn cattle had been running wild in a sixty-mile wilderness of dense junipers west of the town of Bluff, so inaccessible that a horse could not get through. Rounding up these cattle had been so difficult that the owners had abandoned them. The Bluff Pool that claimed ownership signed a contract in 1897 with Al Scorup to gather the wild cows. Al figured he could get the cattle out for five dollars a head, so he hired some tough Bluff boys and went to work. It was a tough job, roping wild steers, twisting tails, dehorning, yoking two animals together, and using every known trick to get the cattle out. By spring they had rounded up more than 2,000 head. Al deposited almost \$10,000 in the bank at Durango, which the Scorup Brothers needed badly to operate on.

The Bluff Pool collapsed and the Scorup Brothers bought it out. They bought top grade bulls in Sanpete County and trailed them to White Canyon. By 1912 they had become a sizeable outfit, with thousands of their cattle ranging over tens of thousands of acres from Elk Ridge of the Blue Mountains to the junction of the San Juan and Colorado Rivers.

Hard times came in 1918 when Jim Scorup died and Al was left with 36 inches of snow covering the grass his cattle needed. No hay was available. By spring almost 2,000 head of Scorup's Indian Creek cattle were dead. Al paid a trapper \$1.50 each to skin the dead carcasses, and he sold the hides for 28-cents a pound. But Al was able to roll with the punches and stay in the business.

In 1926 Al Scorup, Jacob Adams, and the Summervilles organized the Scorup-Sommerville Cattle Company with Al holding the bulk of the stock. A Forest Service grazing permit issued to this company in 1927 is said to be the largest permit ever issued in the United States. It was for 6,780 head of cattle.

The range for this outfit covered almost two million acres of land. Each year from 7,000 to 10,000 cattle ranged over the area.

Al Scorup continued riding horseback until he was 80 years old. In later life he always wore a white shirt, probably remembering the years when he did not own one. He is still remembered as a tough, shrewed, outstandingly successful cattleman. His crowning achievement was election to the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City, where his memory is honored by the elite of the cattle industry.

The above flashbacks in the history of range management in Utah provide the setting for the annual meeting of the Society for Range Management in Salt Lake City next February. All rangemen are invited to get together at this meeting to consider past experiences, rub shoulders, and renew acquaintances with old friends, and listen to the experts give reports of new developments in the field of range management.

We look forward to seeing you all in Salt Lake City.

Sources

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