

700.024

Blaine County

Nov. 6/41.

William T. Murray

Number of words 730

Harlem, Montana

Subject: America Eats

Source: Edd Weider

Edd Weider was born in Germany in the year 1866 and came to America and landed in New York in the year 1878 and came to Billings Montana in 1892.

He worked on different ranches and drove freight ^{team} around Billings for eight years.

Mr Weider came to Harlem in 1900 and worked around the Bearpaw Mountains on different ranches. He worked for Henry Winter, Ensign Sweet, and L. B. Taylor.

He worked back and forth between Billings and Harlem until 1925 when he worked continually around Harlem.

In 1900 when he first started to herd sheep he had to live in a tent.

In the spring of 1902 Mr Weider and the camp tender were taking two bands of sheep belonging to Mr Sweet from the Bearpaw Mountains to north of the Milk River Valley where there was open range.

One afternoon when they were on their way to the north country with the sheep Mr Weider was out looking after the flock and the camp tender was laying in the tent, a strong wind came up and blew the tent to pieces, and that night they had to sleep out in the open. The next morning Mr Weider sent the camp tender to head quarters for another tent and told him to tell Mr Sweet to send out another herder, but instead Mr Sweet sent a new camp tender.

There were no houses or fences between the Milk River Valley and the Canadian line, all open range and you could go north with the flock of sheep until the Canadian Mounties would stop you.

On May first 1901, while on his way north with a flock of sheep a snow storm struck and it snowed for three days and three nights, the snow was about two and one half to three feet deep and on the fourth day the sun came out warm and the snow settled and made a large amount of slush and the sheep could not paw through it so as to get

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anything to eat, he says that the sheep would eat one another's wool, some ranchers lost from twenty five to fifty percent of their sheep.

Mr Weider lost only three hundred head out of five thousand three hundred head.

After the storm was over the ground was so soft and the mud so deep that he could not move the sheep.

In about eight or ten days Mr Sweet came to see them and said that it looked as though they had all the sheep from the Bearpaw Mountains as the sheep were strung out for three or four miles along the ridges, Mr Sweet told Mr Weider that he sure was doing good.

They would drive the sheep back to the Bearpaw Mountains to be winter. They never did feed the sheep in the winter time only during a storm.

In the early days the sheepherders meals consisted of plenty of potatoes, salt meat, ham and bacon. The coffee was roasted and they would carry a small hand coffee grinder to grind the coffee as they needed it. They had plenty sugar, syrup, and dried fruits. They made baking powder biscuits, baking powder pancakes and in the winter time they had plenty corn bread and baked beans. In the later years they had all kinds of canned things. The herders had to do most of their own cooking. When there was a couple of bands in one bunch they would have two men a herder and a camp tender, when they had only one band in a bunch the camp tender would look after three camps.

In the early ^{days} the camp tender used a team for all of his work. Now a days they have camp wagons and most of them have rubber tires and are generally moved by truck or automobile. When the herders would start north towards the Canadian line all they had ~~for~~ for a guide was the creeks. On fine days the herder would make small piles of rock so that in case of a storm he would have them for a landmark to find his camp by.