



Transfer of the famed P ranch in Harney county to the government as a game refuge is complete. The \$675,000 paid for the ranch, 35 miles long, made it the biggest real estate transfer reported this year. In the picture, Carl Donagh, United States district attorney (seated, right), is passing the \$675,000 check to Charles Hart, attorney for the Eastern Oregon Livestock company; J. W. McCulloch (standing, left), special assistant to the United States attorney general, who arranged the sale, and Stanley Jewett, director of the predatory animal control bureau of the biological survey, look on.

## Oregon Ranch to Be Game Refuge

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an undersized, 5-foot body, was directing branding operations on his Diamond valley ranch when Syd Smith, another famed figure of those days, dashed up to warn them of the approach of the redskins.

### DIES IN BOOTS

French had the only rifle in the party. Directing his men to saddle and ride hell-for-leather, Pete took his stand by the corral and stood off the advance of the Indians. Then he jumped aboard his stallion, and fought a running fight with the Indians until he reached safety at the P ranch, 14 miles away. The ranchers' only casualty was a Chinese cook, who was thrown from his horse and scalped by the pursuing tribesmen. The cowboys then assembled and rode to Camp Harney, 90 miles away, covering approximately 100 miles in 15 hours.

Diminutive Pete, whose passion was land, land and more land, died with his boots on December 26, 1897, in the true tradition of the land rights.

### MAND BIRDS THERE

After his death, the P ranch, which stretched 70 miles from Malheur lake to the foothills of Stein mountain at the source of the Blitzen river, passed into the hands of several land development companies. Big Bill Hanley of Burns, last survivor of the great cattle barons of Oregon, became the manager. Under his direction, giant dredges ditched and drained vast bottom lands, and the P ranch became one of the greatest hay ranches in the Oregon country. It was acquired several years ago by Swift & Co. interests. The Eastern Oregon livestock company is a Swift subsidiary. Hanley is still alive and recalls distinctly events

of the early days. His biography, "Feelin' Fine," was published three years ago by Anne Shannon Monroe.

The marshy lands stretching 35 miles back from Malheur lake have always been a favorite breeding ground of migratory waterfowl, according to Stanley Jewett, executive of the predatory animal control bureau, whose hobby is Southeastern Oregon fauna. Jewett counted 120 species of birds nesting on the P ranch last May. Millions of ducks and geese breed annually there, and were once an important source of ranch cookshack provisions.

W. L. Finley, naturalist and conservationist, who was largely responsible for having President establish the Malheur game refuge in 1908, and Jewett have been active in urging the acquisition of the P ranch by the government as a game refuge.

The sale was arranged by Donagh and J. W. McCulloch, special assistant to the United States attorney general, and Charles Hart, attorney or the livestock company. It was

necessary to attach \$675 in internal revenue stamps to the transfer of title.

"The acquisition of the new game refuge is one of the most progressive steps ever made in wild life conservation," Jewett said. "It will be a year-round sanctuary for wild life under direction of the biological survey. The decrease in waterfowl breeding grounds, due to drouth in the Middle West, makes its acquisition doubly important."

It is planned to maintain the historic "P" ranchhouse as headquarters for biological survey officials. Where once the wild yells of savages and the shots of gunfighters resounded, henceforth only the muted calls of nesting waterfowl will break the silence of the plains, and the "P" ranch, scene of the last stand of the old West, will pass into the limbo of peaceful pursuits.

## Great Oregon Ranch to Be Game Refuge

By Jack Grover

Sale of the historic P Ranch, 65,000-acre cattle barony in Harney county, famed in the romantic history of the Oregon cow country, for use as a federal game refuge was announced today by Carl C. Donagh, United States district attorney, who turned over a check for \$675,000 to the Eastern Oregon Livestock company to complete the largest real estate transfer in the state this year.

It was Peter French, pint-size sower of the seeds of empire, who fought the wilderness and Indians and battled hostile ranchers to carve out his vast holdings in Donner and Blitzen valley in the riotous, gun-fighting days of 1870, who established the P Ranch, which was the headquarters of his sprawling acres.

### HANDS OFF INDIANS

The great white ranchhouse erected by French, decorated with a frieze of cattle brands burned in its walls, is famed in the folk tales of Southeastern Oregon. Here gathered such fabled great ones as "Hen" Owen, John Devine, Bill Hanley and others of the gallant crew who ran their teeming herds of bawling cow critters on the lush pasturage of Blitzen valley, Happy valley and Catlow valley.

Old-timers still tell the story of Pete French's one-man stand against a roving band of Indians during the Bannock-Piute Indian war in 1878. Pete, who was pioneer dynamite in

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