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Linn Century Farms Honor Those Farmers Who Have Remained With the Soil

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The Century Farm program is reportedly the first of its kind in the nation. It is unique in that it delves into the past to honor those citizens who have remained with the soil—those who have owned and operated the same parcel of land from generation to generation for one hundred years.

The idea of the Century Farm program originated with the Oregon Historical Society and is sponsored jointly by this group and the State Department of Agriculture with the assistance and cooperation of the county judges and the Oregon State Fair Commission. As a tribute to Oregon's basic industry, agriculture, the first recognition of Century Farms was given during the Oregon State Fair on Sept. 2, 1958, when Governor Robert D. Holmes presented the beautiful Century Farm parchment certificates to 354 descendants of 232 Oregon farmers of 1858 or earlier.

Other participating dignitaries in that memorable program were the director of the Oregon Historical Society, the state director of agriculture, the chairman of the Oregon State Fair Commission and the president of the County Judges' Association of Oregon. Fifty-five of these certificates went to Linn County farmers which shows that this county was the destination for many of those pioneers who crossed the plains by ox team prior to 1858.

Owners Increase

Owners of Century Farms today outnumber the original farms because the farms through the years were divided by inheritance. Originally their owners bought donation land claims as was the

case of the grandfather of the late Charles L. Jones of Dever and Loren Bond of Knox Butte. Some of the emigrants took up donation land claims as did Martin Payne, grandfather of Mrs. Leslie Cade of Grand Prairie.

If one could examine the applications for Century Farm certificates, one would find, according to the Agriculture Bulletin published by the State Department of Agriculture, that pioneer farmers followed a simple pattern of agriculture. They raised crops such as oats, wheat, barley and hay which is understandable for they also owned horses, mules, cattle and sheep. Records show that an orchard was usually included in the layout of the pioneer farmstead. The Martin Payne farm now owned by the Leslie Cades once claimed 25 acres of fruit. Loren Bond relates that his grandfather, Nathan Bond, who came to the Knox Butte area in 1854 grew a family peach orchard from peach pits brought from Iowa. Records also show that cane berries were grown on a limited scale.

Sprays and dusts were, of course, unknown as there was no Extension Service to guide agricultural pursuits. The Agriculture Bulletin gives an interesting version of one method the farmer used in combatting orchard pests. Candles over which a lamp shade was placed were set in pans of water. These were left under the trees during the night and by daylight the pans would be filled with moths!

In the ease of modern life it is difficult to imagine the living conditions of these early Linn county folk. Think of the muddy roads and the lack of electricity, to say nothing of the absence of plumb-

ing! Fortunate was the family that enjoyed a hand water pump on the back porch for many drew their water from a well. Trips to town were timed for essentials only and communication was by word of mouth. Theirs, indeed was a rugged and resourceful life.

The Century Farm program has created uncommon interest. Early in 1959 the Extension Service cooperated in a Centennial Soils Probe to determine the quality of the farming methods used by these early settlers. Our Linn County Extension office confirms the report that one hundred years of cropping have not decreased

the productivity of Oregon soils. In 1959, forty-four more farms were added to the list, eleven of which came from Linn county. The oldest farm represented in the 1959 program was in Yamhill county; that of Lewis Alderman, son of the original founder, Albert Alderman, who settled on the land in 1846.

Three more Linn County farmers received Century Farm parchments in 1960. At this time the announcement was made that the quest for Century Farms was being switched to every five years with the next program due during the State Fair of 1965 which, by

the way, will be the 100th year for the Oregon State Fair.

Requirements Stated

The requirements to have a farm recognized as a Century Farm are:

1. A farm is three acres or more land producing agricultural products worth \$150 or more each year.

2. A Century Farm will be one owned or managed continuously since the calendar year of 100 years ago or earlier in the same family—passing through brothers or sisters, or sons or daughters, to their children's children or adopted children. Present owners

or owner-manager must be persons now living in Oregon.

3. Farmers seeking to qualify must submit affidavit or other certification of continuous ownership to the County Judge of the county in which the land lies. The closing date is usually early in July.

4. The County Judge will accept or reject the claim to ownership and submit his decision to the Director of the State Agriculture Department before Aug. 1.

5. In the event of joint occupancy, each family will receive a document.

6. Application blanks are avail-

able from the County Court.

Recipients Listed

1958 recipients of Century Farm certificates in Linn county are: Albany, Leander Burkhardt, Zella Burkhardt, Winnie Cade, J. A. Hamilton, John Hamilton, Charles L. Jones, Kenneth H. Miller, Lottie E. Morgan, Harold K. Mullen, Lydia Mullen and J. P. Swank; Lebanon, Mrs. Otis Beard, Frank Bellinger, Alfred Wheeler, Charles Wheeler, Dean Wheeler, Scott Wheeler and Robert Wheeler; Harrisburg, Dillard Alford and Verl C. Burkhardt; Shedd, Tampa Brock, Mabel Farwell, Janet Herring, E. F. Morgan, Lena Pugh,

Harry Sprenger and Delmar Stenson; Brownsville, Jack Cochran, Ella Cushman, Grace Gunderson and Alice Shelton; Scio, G. A. Griffin, W. J. Kelly, Masel M. Lyon, Fred W. Mespelt, Darrel Montgomery and Vardie E. Shelton; Tangent, Harold Jackson, W. C. Scott, Mack Slate, Jr., and Thomas Spenger; Corvallis, Mrs. C. C. Jacoby.

Crawfordsville, R. R. Robnett, Halsey, Clarence Evans and Velma Evans; Sweet Home, Jennie Rice and Edgar Russell; Tillamook, Alice Frank; Cottage Grove, Lena McFarland; Portland, Pearl M. Thompson; Stayton, Mabel

Bowman, V. M. Standley, Pearl Rice and Hazel Sims; Eugene, Otto E. Alford. Linn county contributed the following names in 1959: Albany, Vivian M. Forster, Loren J. Bond and Stacy Neeley; Tangent, Yates Sherer and John L. McFarland; Brownsville, Florence Harrison; Eugene, Mrs. Elsie Bond and Mrs. Mabel Reagan; Shedd, Bertha Watson; Sweet Home, Mrs. S. V. Barr; Lebanon, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Alvin. In 1960 these persons received the Century Farm certificates: Halsey, Raymond S. Kirk; Scio, Mr. and Mrs. Otto B. Leever; Lebanon, Fay M. Miller.