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# Century Farm histories shared by owners

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FOUNDATION WALL, HAND BUILT, 22 inches thick, supports the sturdy Elligsen barn where son Rudie tends his County Fair entry.

By WENDY SMITH

A Century Farm, as certified by the Oregon Historical Society, must have been owned and operated continuously by the same family for a century or more.

Owners seeking Century Farm status must show written proof of past ownership, list all family members born on the property and fill out countless forms before certification is given.

"But it's worth it," says Mrs. Emily Koellermeier, who with her husband Chester applied for and received Century Farm status this year.

The following is a brief history of the Koellermeier farm and other local farms certified this year.

## Koellermeier Farm 1876-1976

Friederich and Sophia Koellermeier came to Oregon from Germany. In January 1876 they purchased 80 acres of land from Ambrose R. Cyrus. Cyrus had homesteaded the land and his original abstract (deed) was signed by President Grant.

The Koellermeiers paid \$1,100 for the property, which lies east of Peters Road, between Advance and Johnson Roads. Chester Koellermeier, Friederich's grandson, and his wife Emily, still own 30 acres of the original farm, where they grow grain crops.

Their home lies a quarter mile north of the old homestead site. "All of the old buildings are gone now," says

wrote Louise, suggesting she come and keep house for him and to each of her sons he would give 80 acres of land. Three sons, George, Frederick and Zacharias, came with their mother and Elligsen Farms had its beginning.

George Elligsen's grandson, Ralph and his wife Shirley now live in the house by the familiar sign. They are unsure when the house was built, but Ralph's father, William, was born there in 1885.

The barn, built in 1905, is an excellent example of the pride in workmanship of those days. All the lumber was cut at the farm and some trees were four or five feet in diameter. One main support beam, at least 14 inches square, spans 60 feet without a joint. Foundation walls, 22 inches thick, were hand-built with native rock. The laborer was paid \$1.50 a day for his efforts.

The Elligsen's still farm the original 80 acres, given to Ralph's grandfather. Registered Angus cattle and Romney sheep are the mainstay of the farm today.

That difficult curve in the road was always there, but Ralph points out that horse buggies didn't have the speed problem of today's cars.

Also receiving a Century Farm certificate this year are Edward and Meta Elligsen, 23765 S.W. 6th Ave., Tualatin, who own another portion of the George Elligsen property on Frobese Road. There are no buildings on this acreage, but close by stands the original Papenberg home. Situated on property owned by Mrs. Maude Elligsen, the

acres close to the Tualatin river, west of Wankers Corner.

Being almost 50 years old at the time, Athey started farming on a small scale. Most of the acreage was covered with a heavy stand of fir trees. Present owner William Schaber, grandson of Athey, remembers as a boy seeing many of the large trees rotting after blowing down in an 1879 windstorm.

School for young Schaber was at Frogpond, north of the present Grange building, later moved to its current location on Stafford Road (home extension building).

The Schabers own 80 acres of the original Donation Land Claim but only 40 of the acres qualify as a Century Farm. At one time the other half was sold outside the family but later repurchased by the Schabers.

A 1935 fire took the old barn and all its contents. The current barn was built in its place the same year. Local children have spent many a summer harvesting Schaber strawberries, a main crop at the farm.

## Aden Farm 1876-1976

Seventy-seven-year-old Myrtle (Aden) Cumberland is the youngest and last surviving child of John Aden, founder of Aden Farm.

She has many memories of growing up in the old homestead, on 65th Ave. across from Edmunds Rose Farm. A former showplace in these parts, the house still stands but is overgrown and not visible from the road.

"Daddy came to America from Germany when he was just seventeen years old. That was in 1851 and he spent some time back east before coming to Oregon," relates Mrs. Cumberland. "He farmed in Washington for awhile but eventually brought his stock over the Barlow Trail and settled here." It was in 1876 that John Aden bought the farm of 98 acres from Sebastian Miller, who had homesteaded the property. The house was probably built around this time since, in 1877, John's marriage to Louise Oldenstadt took place in the family living room.

In the next few years the living room was the hub of local activity. Services for both the Frogpond and Stafford Baptist congregations were held there before the churches were built. John, a baptist, helped build Frogpond, which was a German Evangelical Church. Mrs. Cumberland remembers, "The Frogpond minister used to teach German and our parents sent us there to help retain our heritage."

The farm products of grain and milk were taken to Portland by horse and wagon. It was a one day trip, according to Mrs. Cumberland, but was hard going on the muddy roads.

A nephew of Mrs. Cumberland, Alton Aden, is the present owner of the property. Another nephew, Emery Aden of Wilsonville, preserves memories of the farm and the Wilsonville area with a collection of early photographs.

## Crisell Farm 1868-1976

Settling on the south bank of the Willamette River, west of Boones Ferry, William A. Crisell used the steamboats for his produce and farm labor.

Hop pickers would ride the boats out from Portland to Crisell's Landing, spend the day in the fields picking hops, then return to Portland at night along with the farm produce. Mrs. Crisell, as was the custom, would cook a full meal for all the workers at midday.

The farm of some 200 acres was purchased in 1868, with early records showing the name Crisell spelled Criswell.

A barn, still standing, was built in 1896 and the current residence was completed in 1915.

Elmer Crisell, grandson of William



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Their home lies a quarter mile north of the old homestead site. "All of the old buildings are gone now," says Emily, "but they did use some of the old timbers to build this house."

Two years after settling here, Friederich helped build Meridian (Frogpond) Church. Roads in the area at that time were muddy and deeply rutted by wagon wheels. When Chester was a young boy many's the time rural mail carrier, "Chet", with his two-horse buggy, couldn't make it up the Peters Road hill. Koellermeiers would come to the rescue with spare horses.

"The children all went to the Advance School in those days. It was a little red building near the corner of Advance and River Roads," remembers Emily. "They were taught German since a lot of families still spoke it at home. As a young bride I would go to church (Frogpond) by buggy and the service was half German, half English."

#### Elligsen Farms 1877-1976

It isn't every day that an uncle gives 80 acres of land to each of his three nephews, but in 1877, George Papenberg did and here's the way it happened.

In 1847 George Papenberg and his sister Louise left Hanover, Germany, bound for eastern Canada. On the boat coming over Louise met Zacharias Elligsen, from Berlin. She later married him and settled in Canada.

George eventually left Canada for the California gold fields, where he met with little success. Having helped a friend move to Oregon, George decided to stay and bought a small farm in Eugene. Eight years later in 1866 he purchased the 480 acres, near Stafford, for three dollars an acre.

In 1876 it was 25 years since he's last seen his sister Louise, now widowed with seven children. Bachelor George

wrote Louise, suggesting she come and keep house for him and to each of her sons; he would give 80 acres of land. Three sons, George, Frederick and Zacharias, came with their mother and Elligsen Farms had its beginning.

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A short distance away, in the cemetery he donated to his church, (Frogpond), lies George Papenberg. Buried alongside him is his sister Louise.

#### Schaber Bros. Farm 1875-1975

The first time Matthew Athey saw the Oregon Territory was in 1850, when he came west from Virginia with a survey team. He returned in 1875 by wagon, bringing his wife and family and filed a Donation Land Claim of 160

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Elmer Crisell, grandson of William, and his wife Elsie, farm the remaining 42 acres of the property. No longer in the hop business, the Crisells now grow wheat and clover.

These farms, along with 61 others certified this year, will be honored at the Oregon State Fair, Tuesday, Aug. 31, at 2 p.m. During the event, arranged by the Oregon Historical Society and the Department of Agriculture, owners will be presented with a parchment certificate in the name of the ancestor who settled the farm.



EARLY PHOTOGRAPH of the Elligsen Century Farm homestead. Built before 1885, the home at 7485 S.W. Elligsen Road, Tualatin, still houses the current owners, Ralph and Shirley Elligsen.