

CFR 0883

Harley C. McDonald

To qualify as a Century Farm a farm must have not less than 10 acres with a gross income from farm use of not less than \$500 per year for three out of the five years immediately preceding application for Century Farm honors.

APPLICATION FOR CENTURY FARM HONORS--1976
(Rules Attached)
Deadline for filing application: July 1, 1976

PLEASE PRINT

Your name (Mr., Mrs., Miss) Harley C. McDonaldYour address: Route 1 P.O. Box 98 Town SummervilleLocation of farm: 3 1/2 miles NE of Summerville Union
(Address) (County) 97876Acres in your farm today: about 75-8 Acres in original farm: 480Does your farm comply with the definition at top of page? yes

Name of family member who was founder or original owner of farm (please print):

Hiram McDonaldYear founder settled on farm? 1873 Where did he come from? Missouri but heHow many families have farmed this land? 5 lived in Willamette Valley then before moving to Union CountyAre any of original buildings still in use? yesWho farms land today? You? A renter? X A manager? Other? If you own the farm but live in town, do you manage the farming operation? What relation are you to the original owner? GrandsonIf you know crops or livestock raised on farm 100 years ago, please list They had sheep
horses. They probably raised grain as soon as they got land cleared.
They also began planting an orchard. Their garden wasalso very important to them.What do you raise on farm today? Hogs, cattle, wheat, barley and hayHow many generations live on the farm today? (Names) 3 generations Harley & Lottie McDonald,
our son George and
wife Karla and their children Jeanne, Ann, Scott, Jeffery
and Mary Lou McDonaldHas the farm ever been rented? yes this same ground. He lived here and raised cattle & hogs. How many times has original farm been divided? 0

Please list on separate page attached other historical facts you know about this farm.

Do you declare that the statements made above are accurate and correct to the best of your knowledge? yes.Mail to: Oregon Dept. of Agriculture
Agriculture Bldg., Salem, OR 97310Harley C. McDonald
(Signature of owner)

Form A - Century Farm Program
Oregon Department of Agriculture
Oregon Historical Society

CERTIFICATION OF OWNERSHIP OF CENTURY FARM

I hereby certify that the farm for which Mr. Harley C. McDonald
(Owner's name and address)
Rt. 1, P.O. Box 98 Summerville, Oregon

is applying for Century Farm Honors, has been in his family continuously for
100 or more years. This 21st day of June, 1976.

SHIRLEY L. BOLIN, UNION COUNTY CLERK

by: Barbara C. Baker, Deputy

* County Commissioner-Recorder

June, 21, 1976

(Date)

*Please strike office not applicable

-1- 1976 Century Farm Application
Submitted by Harvey C. McDonald, Rt. 1, Box 98
Additional Information: Sumnerville, Ore. 97876

I am not sure that my farm can be classed as a Century farm, but since my sons and daughters, plus a couple of daughters-in-law, seem to think it can be, I am sending this application.

Heran McDonald and Margaret Taylor, my paternal grandparents were married in Sullivan County, Missouri in 1856. In 1864 they crossed the plains to Oregon with their four daughters.

They settled in the Willamette Valley near Harrisburg where they remained seven years. One son and another daughter were born there. In 1871 they moved to Pilot Rock, but stayed only a short time. In 1872 they moved to Union County. They lived on Dry Creek for a time. In 1873 they moved into a lean-to that Heran had built on 160 acres he was homesteading on Pumpkin Ridge.

The first winter they were here, Hiram spent his evenings planing boards for the house he would build the next year. Margaret spun wool. They worked by the light of tallow candles and the fireplace fire.

July 14, 1875 Hiram purchased the east $\frac{1}{2}$ of the south-east $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 25, Township 1 North, Range 38 east of Willamette Meridian, containing 80 acres, from Isaac Gordon.

It is on this property that I base any claim that I may have to this place being a Century Farm.

March 12, 1880, Margaret and Hiram's third daughter, Mary C. died.

February 20, 1884, having met the qualifications of the Homestead Act of May 20, 1862, Hiram was granted a patent to the south-west $\frac{1}{4}$ of the south-east $\frac{1}{4}$, and south $\frac{1}{2}$ of the south-west $\frac{1}{4}$ of section thirty, and the north-east $\frac{1}{4}$ of the south-west $\frac{1}{4}$ of section thirty-one, Township 1 north of Range 39 east of

39 Willamette Meridian, in Oregon, containing
 $159 \frac{22}{100}$ acres.

December 5, 1884 Susan Elizabeth
McDonald was issued a deed for the
north $\frac{1}{2}$ of the south-west $\frac{1}{4}$, the
north west $\frac{1}{4}$ of the south-east $\frac{1}{4}$ and
the south-west $\frac{1}{4}$ of the north-east $\frac{1}{4}$
of section thirty in Township 1, North
of Range 39 east of Willamette Meridian,
Containing $159 \frac{27}{100}$ acres. She obtained
it under the Public Land Law of 1820.

September 21, 1885 Susan Elizabeth
McDonald Becker and her husband
Albert Becker sold this land to Hiram
McDonald for \$200.

October 6, 1885 Hiram McDonald
purchased the north-east $\frac{1}{4}$ of the
north-east $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 36, Township 1, North
Range 38 east of Willamette Meridian from
the Board of Commissioners for Sale of
School, University and other State Lands,
containing 40 acres, for \$80.

January 31, 1887 Hiram McDonald
purchased the east $\frac{1}{2}$ of the north-west $\frac{1}{4}$
of section 38, Township 1 north, Range 39

East of Stillanetta Meridian, containing 80 acres,
from Charles J. Chatten and John H. Chatten
for \$400.

This approximately 519 acres was
all the land Hiram McDonald acquired in
Union County during his lifetime. He died
January 19, 1912. Margaret McDonald
continued to live here by herself in the
groove house she and Hiram had had
built about 1897, after all their children
had left home.

My father, George William McDonald
and Anna D. Smith were married
December 14, 1897. They had 4 children:
George Wesley, born December 20, 1898;
Harley Cecil, born July 31, 1901, and
twins Mary Marie, and Margaret Mae,
born November 1, 1903. My father
had bought a place on Pumpkin
Ridge near his parents. Besides
farming he did custom thrashing for
most of his adult life. He also tried
running a sawmill in which he
had $\frac{1}{2}$ interest, but this was a
financial disaster.

When his father died, he rented
this place from his mother and

-5- farmed it as well as his own. He used a considerable amount of hired help.

While he was renting from his mother, my father purchased the west $\frac{1}{2}$ and the south-east $\frac{1}{4}$ of the north-west $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 31, Township 1 north, Range 39 East of the Willamette Meridian amounting to $118\frac{80}{100}$ acres. He bought this land from William and Emma West, April 27, 1914.

July 1, 1918 he bought the south-east $\frac{1}{4}$ of the north-east $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 36, Township 1 north, Range 38 east of the Willamette Meridian. Later, after he owned the place on December 14, 1927, he bought the north-west $\frac{1}{4}$ of the north-east $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 30, Township 1, north Range 39 East of Willamette Meridian, containing 40 acres, from Charles Gordon by way of Arthur Hallgarth.

My grandmother died October 1, 1921 and my father bought the shares of his 4 sisters with the help of a considerable loan from the Federal Land Bank.

My brother Wesley and his wife lived here for most of 1922. Then Wesley and his wife moved to the house

-6- we had lived in and my father and mother together with my two sisters and myself moved here in 1923.

Hesley, my father and myself farmed together for a time and then Hesley and his wife moved to town where Hesley took up electrical work.

My sister Mary married in 1925 and my sister Margaret married in 1926. My mother died in 1931. In 1934 my father deeded $\frac{1}{2}$ of this farm to me.

In 1936 I married Lottie Black.

May 16, 1925, I purchased the north-west $\frac{1}{4}$ of the north-east $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 31, Township 1, north, Range 39 east of Willamette Meridian from Frank Snow.

My father died August 7, 1937. In settling the estate, according to his will, my sisters got my father's old place, Hesley got a cash settlement and I received the rest of my father's property plus its mortgage.

7- We have 3 children: Harley Cecil, born December 15, 1937; Oleva Ann, born December 11, 1941 and George William, born February 16, 1945.

I farmed the place with the aid of hired help, though good help became harder to get as time went on.

During the World War II years my wife's sister and her 3 children lived with us. They were a great help.

March, 1946, I deeded $\frac{1}{2}$ interest in the place to my wife.
In 1949, due to poor health and the difficulty in obtaining reliable help, I rented the farm ground on shares. I kept control of the pasture land and the farm buildings and some of the machinery.

We ran cattle and raised hogs during those years.

I base whatever claim I may have of owning a Cuteney farm to the 26 acres of the east $\frac{1}{2}$ of the southwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 24 of Township 1 north, Range 38 east of the Willamette Meridian that was purchased from Isaac Gordon

-8- in 1875. These 26 acres were part of the pasture land that I did not rent. However, it might stretch the imagination to believe that those 26 acres produced \$500 worth of beef in each of 3 of the last 5 years.

After 5 years we began farming the place again with the help of our children and a certain amount of hired help.

Our oldest son graduated from Oregon Technical Institute in 1958. He farmed with us for a time but when ^{he} married and had a family to support he needed more lucrative employment. He began working for Boise-Cascade and is now employed as an electrician in their particle board plant.

Our daughter attended Eastern Oregon College for 2 years and graduated from the University of Oregon in 1964 after studying there for 2 years. She had married during her junior

9. year and after she graduated, she and her husband went to California where they both taught school for several years. They came back to Oregon and are now operating a travel service in La Grande.

Our younger son did not go on after graduating from high school. He farmed with me until 1968 when he rented the place. My wife and I raise pigs with some help from our son.

George, was married to Karla Lund in 1966. They have 4 children, from whom we get a good deal of equipment as they live here on the place and we can see them often.

I would like to think that this place would be farmed by my descendants for years to come, but with the high cost of farm machinery, high wages for inferior hired help, high cost of workman's compensation and Social Security, plus the fact that labor leaders seem to be able to say what farmers are entitled to get for their crops, makes me wonder how long the small farmer can survive.

1976

From: "David Yerges" <kdyerges@eoni.com>
To: "Rick Read" <rickr@ohs.org>
Date: 12/27/00 4:26PM
Subject: McDonald Century Farm article published Dec 21 Union County

The McDonald Century Farm
By Trish Yerges

Nestled in the secluded hills on Pumpkin Ridge Road three and a half miles north of Summerville is the McDonald Century Farm. Its history begins in 1873 when Hiram McDonald purchased the initial 40 acres of his 520 acre estate. Today, fourth generation owners, George and Karla McDonald, feel privileged to add their own chapter to the pages of their century farm's history. "We're grateful to have the farm," they said, and they are proud to relate its history for posterity.

Hiram McDonald was the grandson of Jacob McDonald (born 1776) and the son of Noah and Malinda (Jones) McDonald. He was born on February 17, 1834 in Chariton County, Missouri. When Hiram was a child, his mother died. At the age of 12, he moved with his father to Linn County, Missouri, and in 1854 to Sullivan County, Missouri. Two years later on June 29, 1856, he married Margaret R. Taylor, 24, the daughter of Peter and Permelia Taylor.

In 1864 the McDonald couple along with their young children took an ox team and crossed the Oregon Trail with a caravan of 75 wagons. They arrived safely in Linn County, Oregon, where one historian relates that "he was numbered with the prosperous residents." In the fall of 1872, the McDonalds began a migration toward northeastern Oregon. They presumably spent the winter in Umatilla County before purchasing 40 acres from a private party in 1873 in the wooded hills of the northern Grande Ronde Valley.

In 1875, Hiram homesteaded his first 160 acres on Pumpkin Ridge Road. During the summer and fall of 1876, he busied himself with the construction of his family's first home. The building plans called for a root cellar with stone foundation walls over which the kitchen of their two room home was built. Each board in the home was hand planed and each was unique from the next in measurement.

As soon as the dining room was built, the family moved in, thankful to leave their temporary slab shanty for a cozy home lit by night with tallow candles and warmed by a fireplace. Now after the home was built, there was some question in Hiram's mind as to whether or not the structure was sitting on his property. To head off any possible legal problems regarding this matter, he asked his oldest daughter, Susan, to file a homestead claim for the land directly adjacent to his. She did and the McDonalds built her little home not far from Hiram's.

For the next 17 years, this pristine property became home to Hiram, Margaret and their children: Susan, Sarah, Mary E., George W. and Ellen. In 1880 the McDonalds mourned the death of their eighteen year old daughter, Mary E. Three others, Annie, Lee, and John died in infancy or early childhood. Their surviving children included Susan Elizabeth (Becker), Sarah J. (Fisher), Ellen (Oswell) and their son, George W.

The McDonalds endured their losses by focusing on the farm. Hiram made plans to develop the farm, and over time, he completed the construction of a large barn and granary, a fruit house to store the fruit from the orchards, a wood shed and a hog house. There was the necessary outhouse and a smokehouse on the property as well. After their children had grown and left home, Hiram decided to build a new home. In 1893 he hired a local carpenter named Silas Johnson to build a spacious eight room house. Its grandeur was typical of Johnson's work, and at the mention of his name, people knew you had a first class home. Meanwhile, their old house was moved to another part of the property and used as a bunk house.

By 1902, Hiram had increased his land holdings to 520 acres (three quarter sections and the initial 40 acres). These included tillable ground, timberland and 25 acres of fruit trees of every kind native to this area. "He raised grain as soon as he got the land cleared. They also began planting an orchard," said George McDonald about his great-grandfather. The McDonalds resourcefully found a market for their excess produce. Some of Hiram's daughters sold the produce for consumption by the miners outside the valley. Near the McDonald home, Margaret planted a vegetable garden. She also trapped grouse for the dinner table. Besides the fruitage of the land and some occasional trapping, the McDonalds raised sheep, cattle, horses and pigs. The pigs served a dual purpose on the farm. Not only did they provide bacon and hams for the smokehouse, but they also ate up the rattlesnakes around the yard. After Hiram's death on January 19, 1912, Margaret continued to reside on the homestead. Her son, George William and his wife, Annie (Smith) looked after her until her death on October 1, 1921. At this time, George W. and Annie, who had been living on a place on Hug-McDonald Road since their marriage, took possession of the Hiram McDonald farm. Karla explained just how the McDonald torch has been passed along through the generations. "There is a long standing tradition...the son that stayed and took care of the parents, got the farm," she said. That is how it went starting with Hiram and Margaret McDonald. In 1922 the McDonald farmhouse was rented to brother, Wesley McDonald and his wife, and after they moved out, George W. and Annie McDonald took occupancy.

George W. made his share of improvements to the property and added more acreage to his father's 520 acre estate. "They were land poor," said George of his grandparents. This new land required years of work clearing off brush, trees and stumps. "George W. was still blowing stumps when my mother first came out to the farm," said George. Besides the cultivation of new land and the increased work each spring, there was a need for storage space, so George W. built two more barns. To aid him in this building, he and his brother-in-law, Columbus Fisher, ran a saw mill in partnership on Pumpkin Ridge Road. "From the mill site, you could look down on Elgin," George said. The mill stayed in operation until sometime after 1905 when it went under.

The crops which served George W. best included clover for his sheep, and when that was harvested, he planted wheat. "The wheat yield was real good due to the nitrogen left in the soil from the previous clover crop," explained George. He also planted oats, barley and hay. The livestock that George W. raised included sheep, chickens, draft horses, a stud horse and some dairy cows. The stud horse and dairy products both brought income into the family, but so did the annual custom threshing.

Custom threshing was another important source of income for the McDonalds. To help feed the threshing crew, George W. relied heavily upon the produce of his smokehouse. Cured food was frequently fed to the threshing crew. Emphasizing the importance of the smokehouse, Karla said, "That was part of keeping a threshing crew." Of course, there was no one more important than the threshing crew's cook. In 1937, Ruth Smith was the cook of choice for the McDonald custom threshing crew. "The men liked lots of pies...pies...pies," Karla added. With a large orchard, there was no lack of fruit for the pies, just lots of baking for the farm women.

Interestingly, George has a number of his grandfather's and father's custom threshing journals dating from before 1912 through the 1930s. One such journal dated August 16 - October 7, 1933 enumerated working at the N.K. West farm for four days of custom threshing. On the West farm on September 13, George W. and his son, Harley, harvested oats for 3 cents a bushel. Their total harvest came to 3,729 bushels, a paycheck of \$111.87. Another 1933 entry told of a custom threshing job for Clyde McKenzie where the harvest was 990 bushels of oats for 3 cents a bushel. While these farmers paid George W. for his work, some did not. "I was told that he died with a drawer full of IOUs. He didn't always get paid for his custom work," said Karla.

All the while George W. was farming, his son, Harley, was working by his side. He was the "one who stayed and took care of the parents." His mother died June 20, 1931, and his father died on August 6, 1937. Harley, who was born on July 31, 1901 on the farm on Hug-McDonald Road, was always an active participant in his father's farming operation. Around 1926, Harley met Miss Lottie Black, who taught school in Summerville. They knew each other for about ten years before they were married on June 7, 1936. For the young couple, "farming was a challenge from the start. They had to pay off George W.'s mortgage which was equal to the value of the land," George explained.

Still, Harley persevered in farming despite the debt. He raised about 140 hogs and some cattle. His annual harvests included wheat, barley, hay, peas and wheat grass. By this time in Harley's farming career, he was not using many horses except for lifting loose hay into the barn with a pulley system. "He got rid of his last two horses around 1947," George remembered. During the thirties, Harley plowed with a Model U Alice Chalmers, and during the forties he used a combine pulled by a 22 Caterpillar tractor.

While everything seemed to be running well for a number of years, the McDonalds experienced a bad fire in 1961. When they were burning their grass field, the fire got out of control, damaging a neighboring orchard in the process. It was a costly mishap, but once again the McDonalds endured. Harley's son, George, was working with him all these years. George and his wife, Karla, bought a trailer in 1974 when the price of wheat was \$6.00 a bushel. They moved the trailer onto Harley's property, and there they raised six children: Jeanne Ann (Taylor), twins - Scott and Jeff, Mary (Allen), Steven and Mark.

Harley retired from active farming in 1968, and that is when George took over the farm. He was the "one that stayed and took care of the parents...and he got the farm." During their retirement, Lottie took the initiative to apply for the century farm certificate, and they were very pleased to receive it on August 31, 1976 at the State Fair in Salem. After a lifetime of hard work and 920 acres to his credit, Harley Cecil McDonald died on January 18, 1983. Lottie stayed in the large home until 1993 when she had a stroke and moved into a nursing home. She died March 11, 1996.

George, Karla and their remaining minor children, Mary, Steven and Mark, moved into the large home in 1993. Today only Steven, 14, and Mark, 8, still live at home with their parents. "Our children have a great love for this farm. They come here every chance they can. They are very proud of the heritage of this place. Our grandchildren love to come to grandpa's to ride tractors and combines and see the cows," Karla said.

The McDonald farm continues to evolve under George's ownership. He's equipped with a full assortment of necessary farm machinery, and in 1994, he built a 40 x 38 foot metal machine shop. "We're conservative and careful. If you earn a profit, you want to reinvest in the farm," said George. Today the McDonald farm holds steady at 920 acres. Most of it is pasture where 74 head of red Angus and Herefords graze. "I had 100 head before I sold off some steers and cows this year," George said. His timberland accounts for 160 acres, and 280 acres are dry, tillable land for wheat and hay crops. Of the orchard that Hiram planted there are still some of the apricot and apple trees alive, and these keep Karla canning applesauce every fall. Besides these trees, the McDonalds grow plum and pear trees too.

Their century farm will remain in the family, the McDonalds say, even though they are not sure who among their children will be the next heir of the original 160 acre homestead. One bright prospect might be the McDonald's oldest son, Scott, who is a federal wheat breeder at Washington State University. Despite this, the McDonalds don't want to break with tradition when it comes to selecting an heir. Karla smilingly said, "The one who takes care of us best and treats us the best, gets the farm. I guess we'll just have to

wait and see." Meanwhile the McDonalds are young and have much more to contribute to the century farm before they need to think about its next heir.

LA GARY OR
observer
OCT 20 1976

McDonald's Century Farm honored

By KRISTI STEBER
Observer Correspondent

SUMMERVILLE — Harley McDonald's farm has been in his family for over a hundred years, but he is not optimistic about the next century.

"I would like to think that this place would be farmed by my descendents for years to come," McDonald said, "but with the high cost of farm machinery, high wages for inferior hired help, high cost of workman's compensation and Social Security, plus the fact that labor leaders seem to be able to get what farmers are entitled to for their crops makes me wonder how long the small farmer can survive."

On Aug. 31, Harley and Lottie McDonald were recognized at the State Fair in Salem with a parchment certificate designating their Pumpkin Ridge farm as a Century Farm.

McDonald's was the only farm from Union County honored with the distinction this year, and the eighth in the county since the program's inception.

The major requirement of a Century Farm is that it be actively farmed by the same family continuously for one hundred years. The award is sponsored jointly by the Oregon State Department of Agriculture and the Oregon Historical Society.

Harley and Lottie McDonald are the third generation to farm on Pumpkin Ridge. McDonald's grandfather, Hiram McDonald, staked out his homestead there in 1873. The original 160-acre homestead has increased to 320 acres. Most of that is pasture and timber land; only 300 acres is used for farming.

"It has not always been a prosperous living in monetary values," said Mrs. McDonald. "The best product of the farm has been the children. Up here they have room to grow and to learn the value of work and responsibility."

McDonalds' youngest son George has rented the farm-ground since 1968 and is the fourth generation McDonald to carry on the farming tradition.

Although their son has taken over most of the farm chores, Harley and Lottie McDonald remain active. They raise 140 hogs by themselves and help George with advice gleaned from 75 years of experience.

Agriculture has progressed since the century farm was founded. Until Hiram and his family cleared enough land to plant grain, the McDonalds were almost entirely self-sufficient. They grew their own vegetables and planted an orchard. They raised sheep, cattle and horses. Hiram's stud horse sired many a farm team in the Grande Ronde Valley.

When Harley was a boy, real horse-power still pulled the plow and he learned as a youngster to drive a team of six horses without fouling the line. Tractors didn't come to McDonald's farm until the 1930s and

electricity in 1951.

The view from the kitchen door of McDonalds' 80-year-old house hasn't changed much. The Elkhorns stand boldly against the distant horizon. The biggest transformation in the

valley floor below comes only with the seasons. And on top of Pumpkin Ridge, as far as the eye can see in any direction, is McDonald land.

"It's so beautiful and peaceful up here," said Mrs. McDonald. "Even in

times when we've had to tighten our belts, we've always had a roof over our heads and food to eat. It's a satisfying life. If we had a hundred years to do it all over again, we would stay right here."



The McDonald's Century Farm — located on Pumpkin Ridge near Summerville. (Photo by Kristi Steber)

