

CFR 1125

Avalon Orchards
Sydney Blaine

Oregon Agricultural Education Foundation

Century Farm & Ranch Program Application

Date 5-21-08

Type of designation (please check)

Century Farm

Century Ranch

Legal owner / Applicant name Sydney Blaine, Avalon Orchards

Mailing address of Legal Owner / Applicant Redacted for Privacy

Telephone Redacted for Privacy E-mail address Redacted for Privacy

Contact name (if different than legal owner) _____

Mailing address of Contact _____

Contact Telephone _____ Contact E-mail address _____

Location of farm or ranch (which is the subject of this application):

County Hood River

Distance 2 from nearest town Parkdale

Township 1S Range 10E Section 8

Address or physical location of the farm or ranch (which is subject of this application): _____

4676 Hutson Dr.
Parkdale, OR 97041

GPS (Global Positioning System) Coordinates, if known: _____

Statement of Affirmation

I, Sydney Babson Blaine,
hereby affirm and declare that the farm or ranch which I own at Redacted for Privacy
Redacted for Privacy, in the County of Hood River

has been owned by my family for at least 100 continuous years, as specified in the qualifications for the Century Farm & Ranch Program, on or before December 31 of the current calendar year. Further, I hereby affirm that this property meets all other requirements for Century Farm or Ranch honors, including that the farm or ranch has a gross income from farming or ranching activities of not less than \$1,000 per year for three out of the five years immediately preceding making this statement. I understand that the application materials will become property of the Oregon Historical Society Library and be made available for public use. By signing below, I understand that I am consenting to the use of both information and photographs.

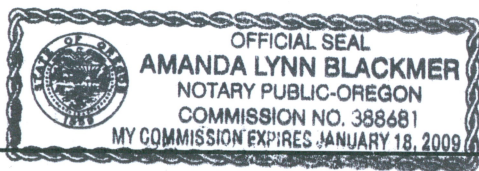
Sydney Babson Blaine 5-27-08
Signature of Owner Date

Certification by Notary Public

State of Oregon
County of Hood River

Be it remembered, that on this 27 day of May, 2008, before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said county and state, personally appeared the within named Sydney Babson Blaine, known to me to be the identical individual described in and who executed the within instrument and acknowledged to me that she executed the same freely and voluntarily.

In Testimony Whereof, I have set my hand and affixed my official seal the day and year last above written.



Amanda Lynn Blackmer

Notary Public for Oregon
My Commission Expires 01-18-2009

Fees

Application Fee
(includes one certificate) \$ 65.00
Additional Certificates (\$20 each) \$ _____
Total enclosed \$ 65.00

Make checks payable to:
Oregon Agricultural Education Foundation or OAEF

For office use only

Date Received _____

Approved? Yes No

Authorization GM
Century Farm & Ranch Program Coordinator
OHS Library

MSS 1604 Program ID No. C7R1125

Century Farm & Ranch Program Application - Continued

Founder(s):

Original family owner(s) or founder(s) Sydney Babson & Rea Babson (brothers)

Date (year) this farm or ranch was acquired by founder(s) 1908

(Attach verifying documentation. See Application Qualification #7)

Who farms or ranches the land today? Sydney & Rick Blaine Avalon Orchard Inc.
* Heather Blaine our daughter

Relationship of Applicant to original owner. Please explain lineage. (See Application Qualification #7)

grand-daughter

History of buildings:

Are any of the original buildings still in use? Yes No

If yes, please describe the buildings and their former and current use:

farm house
barn

Are any of the buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places? Yes No

If "yes", please describe:

History of crops or livestock raised on farm or ranch:

What were the early crops or livestock?

apples, some pears.
strawberries

How many acres were included in original farm or ranch? 46 acres.

How did the crops / livestock / use of farm or ranch change over the years?

The farm has always been in the orchard business. Originally apples were the primary crop, some pears were also planted. After the disastrous 1923 freeze which decimated the apple orchard, my grandfather moved more to pears, keeping less than half the orchard in hardier varieties of apples, less susceptible to winter damage.

Rick and I have continued to move to pears, and that is the only crop we grow at this location. We purchased other farms to grow apples and cherries at more suitable microclimates. Horses were used as work animals only, replaced by tractors.

(Please continue application on next page.)

Century Farm & Ranch Program Application – Continued

History of crops or livestock raised on farm or ranch – Cont'd:

What are crops / livestock raised on the subject farm or ranch today?

We grow the following variety of pears:
D'Anjou
Bartlett
Red Bartlett
Comice
Bosc
Forelle

How many acres does the subject farm or ranch include today?

46

How many acres are in agricultural use today?

± 42

This property only.

The Family:

How many generations live on the farm or ranch today? One

Please list names and birth years:

Rick Blaine 1946
Sydney Blaine 1946

Heather Blaine 1968 works on the farm,
but doesn't live here.

Please submit two or three pages of family history narrative, including, but not limited to generational transfers of the farm or ranch. Please also submit historical & current photos of the property & family, as available.

Type of information to include in your family history narrative:

- Where founder(s) may have moved to farm or ranch from
- Significant events in the family (births, deaths, marriages, etc)
- Any major changes to operations (methods of production, etc.)
- Additional information on crops, buildings, other changes from the original farm or ranch

(Please continue application on next page.)

May 24, 2008

Century Farm Narrative: History of Avalon Orchards.
Babson/Blaine family story

My grandfather, Sydney Gorham Babson, purchased our Parkdale orchard in March of 1908. He had been raised in East Orange, New Jersey, where his father had been an importer of German cement and was the cement contractor for the Flat Iron building in Manhattan, where they then had their offices. My grandfather worked in the family business after graduating from Princeton at 19, but his heart was not in living the city life. Upon the sudden death of his father, he felt released of his agreement to work in the family business. He set out to find just the right location to farm.

My grandfather spent a long time looking specifically for a place to grow apples. He searched all over the country traveling to Virginia, California, British Columbia, Yakima, WA, and then heard of the Hood River Valley. In 1907 he was smitten by the glorious view of Mt. Hood on his tour of the Upper valley. He trudged back and forth across the entire area on foot until he found a spot that seemed to meet all of his requirements. He convinced his brother Rea, a mechanical engineer graduate from Cornell who was working in New York City to join him as a working partner of the ranch.

In February of 1908 my grandfather moved into a tent on the corner of the property. He and his brother hired 15 Japanese workers who lived in two tents next to them and they all cleared and grubbed the land to prepare for the first plantings of strawberries and fruit trees. They cleared the virgin land that was forest and brush and planted apples, the first orchard this far south of Parkdale. The tent had a board floor, a small stove for cooking and heat, a cot and three chairs. They subsisted on carrots, potatoes, apples, rice, raw ham, and cereal, a diet that was to be their mainstay for many years.

That summer my grandfather had a house built on a small rise where the land fell off on all sides, a perfect view spot of Mt. Hood to the south and Mt. Adams to the north. He returned east to marry my grandmother, Grace, and bring her back in October to a farming life, a totally different existence from her life in the city. Grace was a Bryn Mawr graduate and taught Latin and Greek at a NYC private girls' school. The brand new house had a fireplace in the living room and a wood cook stove in the kitchen and no other heat source, nor any heat in the upstairs. Sydney was told a fireplace would be sufficient. They must have been frozen the first winter!

It was my grandmother Grace who selected the name Avalon Orchard, she liked the literary reference to King Arthur. In the Celtic legend, Avalon is an island in Britain famous for beautiful apple trees, a place of tranquility, and the place where King Arthur was taken to recover from his wounds. She always used the name Avalon Orchards on her stationery despite the fact that Sydney and Rea preferred to call the farm Babson Brothers' Ranch.

My grandfather and his brother Rea planted carrots and strawberries between the rows of apple trees for a source of income while waiting for the apples to come

into production. They farmed with a team of horses, moved water for irrigation using the time consuming and back braking rill system, and made their apple boxes in the barn during the winter months. They hand lifted 42 pound lugs of fruit often in long stacks on and off the wagons as they transported them to the packing shed in the large barn. At the end of harvest they packed and boxed the apples themselves. They worked incredible hard to establish the farm, borrowing money from family to get by until the orchards were in production.

Many of their contemporaries tried the farming life, but most of these “New Yorkers”, as the influx of college educated young men were called, grew discouraged at how hard this life was and left after a few years. At one time more than 68 easterners from prominent colleges lived in the upper valley, (with 10 from Princeton), but after a few years only a handful remained.

Sydney and Grace Babson had three children, Arthur, Gorham, and Mary. My father, Gorham Babson, is alive and well at 96 years of age. He worked on the farm growing up and then went to medical school, becoming a pediatrician and the first director of the neonatal intensive care unit at OHSU. He was active in the management of the farm in my grandfather’s later years, but continued to reside in Portland.

My father was the second of the three children and when it was near time for his birth my grandmother went to Portland to deliver the baby in a hospital there. They took the team to Hood River and the train to Portland. The return trip was treacherous with a new infant, snow drifts hindering their long trip south to Parkdale in a farm wagon, the horses struggling in a January storm.

My great uncle Rea Babson did not stay long on the Parkdale farm, returning to work in the East. He remained a partner in the operation until he was paid off in the 1940’s. The other original purchaser, Duane Zimmerman changed his mind in the first few months and the brothers bought him out.

My father Gorham Babson and his wife Ruth had five daughters, Anne, Mary, Sydney, Jane and Barbara, who grew up in Portland. We spent our summers at the orchard, a favorite spot of everyone in the family. I am the middle daughter and was named after my grandfather.

Sydney Babson was a stickler for detail well known for the quality of his fruit. He received the Orchardist of the Year award in 1960.

In 1974 my husband Rick Blaine and I moved to Oregon after living in the east and abroad and we became interested in purchasing the family farm. Rick was trained as an historian and a teacher (MA from Rutgers and M Ed from PSU) but had a strong interest in farming; his grandparents had had a small dairy in Ohio. My grandfather continued to live in the original farm house and we moved into a nearby house on the property with our two young children, Heather and Gorham Blaine. Sydney Babson at 93 was thrilled to have us interested in carrying on the efforts of his lifetime and spent many hours advising us and sharing his ideas. We completed the purchase of the family farm in late 1974.

After my grandfather's death in January of 1975 we moved into the original farmhouse. We raised our children in this home and are only the second family to live in our century old farmhouse.

Rick Blaine, a prodigious worker, undertook a complete renovation of the orchard, replacing old, less productive trees with newer varieties. He modernized the plantings and has been an innovator over the years in the effort to keep us competitive. The global market place has made it imperative for the modern farmer to grow in size, to keep up with changes in world demand, and to renew older fruit blocks to stay in business. Our apples, pears and cherries are shipped all over the world,

Our daughter Heather, a graduate of Whitman College is now our orchard manager and works with Rick overseeing our five orchards, all at different locations. We have expanded the operation over the years and grow fruit in three counties and two states at different elevations in order to be diversified, to protect ourselves (somewhat) from the vagaries of nature and to provide year round work for our employees. Heather has two children, Malcolm and Miga McCurdy who are now old enough to help out during harvest just as she did growing up. Our grandchildren make five generations of the family to work this soil.

Our son Gorham graduated from Williams College in Massachusetts and has a MA from London School of Economics. He and Heather worked for us all through high school and college and became competent in all aspects of our orchard operation. Gorham returned to the farm after a stint in investment banking in NYC and worked several years for us before branching out and buying his own orchards in both the middle and upper Hood River valley. He and his wife Roxanne have two young boys, Evan and Reid Blaine. They are a busy young family, having just purchased historic McIsaac's store, a grocery and hardware store, and an important center of the Parkdale community.

Evan and Reid Blaine both attend Parkdale elementary, which their great grandfather (Gorham Babson) also attended. Gorham Babson started school in the one room Valley Crest School just a few miles south of our home until a larger school was needed, the school bus being a neighbor who picked up the kids with horses and wagon unless there was snow, and then the "bus" turned into a team of horses and sleigh. My father's Parkdale High School graduating class had only 12 students, most of them girls, which was a disappointment for the few boys who wanted a competitive basketball team. There weren't many activities for the children in those days, most worked on the farm when they were in class.

Farming continues to be a challenging and physically demanding occupation. Our family enjoys our busy farm life and still marvels at the glorious site we have at the base of Mt. Hood in Oregon's beautiful Hood River Valley.

Sydney Babson Blaine



Japanese workers 1908



First winter in tent 1908



Sydney and Grace 1909
Infant Arthur in carriage



Japanese workers 1908



Sydney Babson

Rea Babson



Young Arthur and Gorham
with Bee hives



Strawberries



1908



Avalon Barn Young Plank



Grace Babson with son Circa 1911



Grace in newly planted Orchard
~~surround~~ surrounded by forest



Sydney Babson spraying fruit.
circa 1927



Strawberries 1931



Putting up hay about 1912

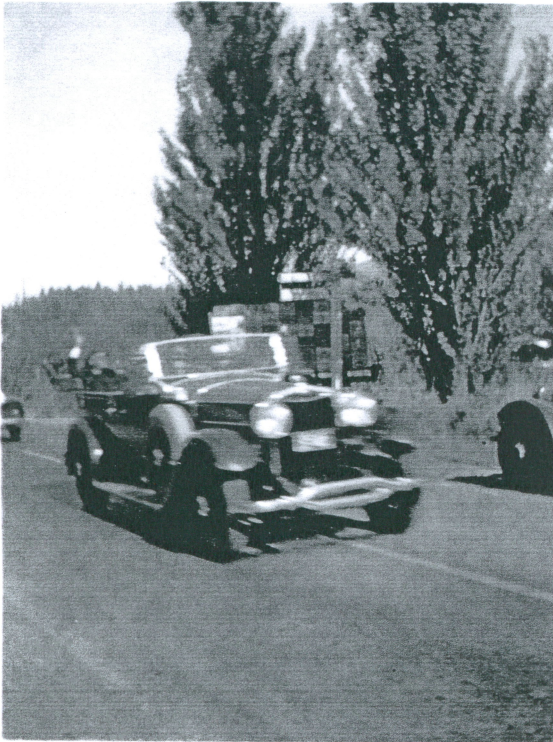


Babson Brothers orchard in 1913. Apple trees
have yet to bear fruit. Uncleared forest
borders the north side.

THE EARLY YEARS



Dad 19 years old. Class of 1902
Graduated Cum Laude, Princeton



Sept 27, 1937
Franklin Roosevelt
driving by Avalon Orchards

Grace Babson Photo

The following is the Official Report of the standing of

M. S. Babson

of the JUNIOR CLASS, B. S. COURSE, for the session ending February 6, 1901.

General Rank for the Term:

First General Group.

Rank in Each Subject:

PHYSICS: Group	<i>1</i>	SPANISH: Group	
ASTRONOMY: Group	<i>1</i>	ITALIAN: Group	
ECONOMICS: Group	<i>1</i>	GERMAN: Group	
CIVIL GOVERNMENT: Group	<i>1</i>	QUAL. ANAL.: Group	<i>1</i>
ENG. LIT.: Group	<i>1</i>	QUANT. ANAL.: Group	<i>1</i>
FRENCH 5: Group	<i>1</i>	SURVEYING: Group	
FRENCH 7: Group	<i>1</i>	ART: Group	
HISTORY: Group	<i>1</i>		

Unexcused absences from Chapel: 56 (allowed)

Excused absences from recitation: 20 (allowed)

Excused days: _____

Record in junior year

Sydney G. Babson
graduation picture

The final glory of the Mt. Hood Loop before its conversion into Highway 35 occurred on September 27, 1937. On that day President Franklin Delano Roosevelt circled the Loop in an open Lincoln touring car leading an entourage of automobiles containing three Northwest Senators and many other dignitaries. Roosevelt's purpose was to dedicate two historic structures on that day: Bonneville Dam built across the Columbia River and Timberline Lodge on the south side of Mount Hood. This exciting event under blue skies was easily accomplished in one day by using the Old Columbia River Highway and the Mt. Hood Loop around Oregon's premiere peak. (It took Samuel Barlow and Joel Palmer three months in 1845 to move their wagon trains on the Oregon Trail from The Dalles to Oregon City around Mt. Hood). After a rousing welcome in Hood River, the cavalcade climbed up through the enthusiastic crowds along the Loop through the orchards of the Hood River Valley into the Mt. Hood National Forest.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's right hand is held high as his Lincoln touring car, open to the air and sun, passes the entrance to Avalon Orchard guarded by two poplar trees. Mrs. Roosevelt sits between her husband and Charles Martin, Governor of Oregon. One secret service man sits next to the driver. Bill Lassen's Chevy truck with a load of apple boxes waits for the President to pass.

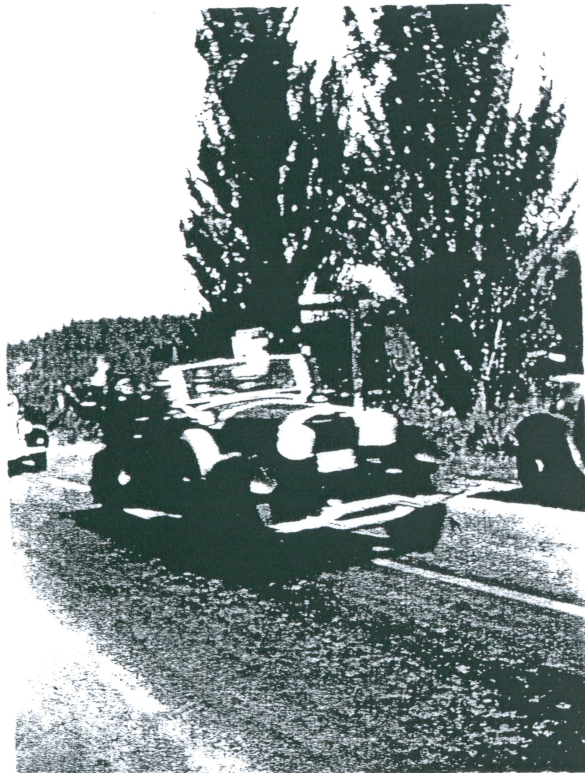
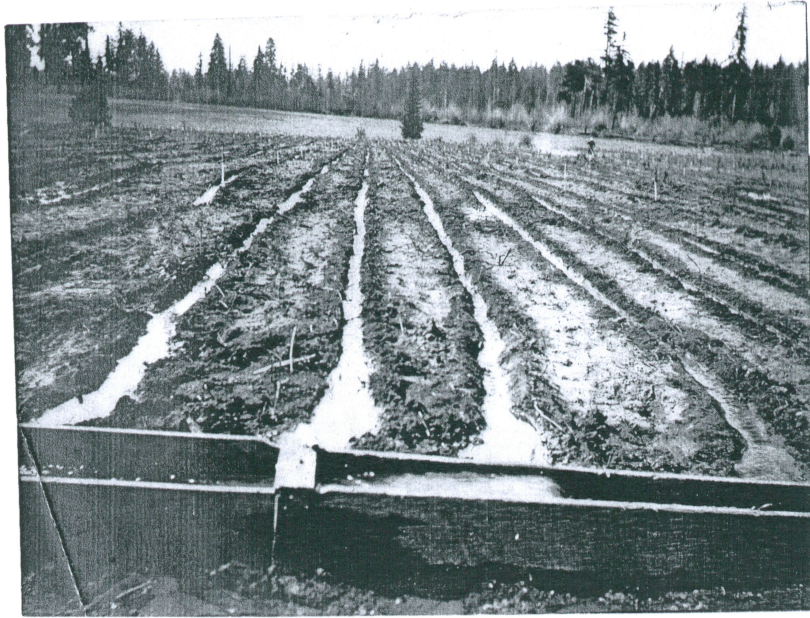


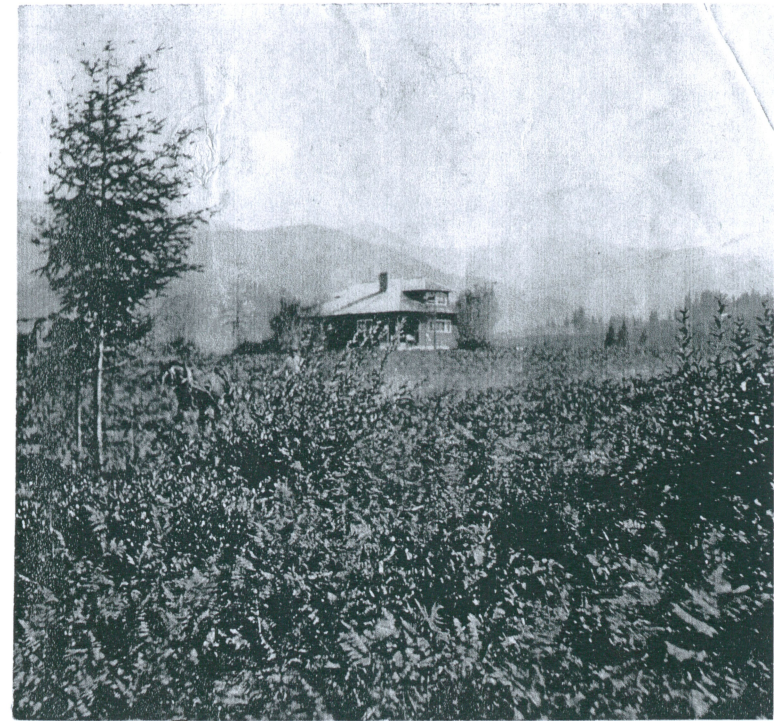
Photo by: Grace Babson



Babson family 1913 Parkdale, OR



Irrigation



Babson home



East Hills to East
apple planting

Enclosed is a notarized (copy) of the mortgage for our farm. It was filed in Wasco Co. (The Dalles) which was the county seat at the time.

I attempted to get a copy of the deed that is on microfilm, however, the day I was at the courthouse, the machine was faulty.

Please let me know if I need a copy of the deed as well, I will be happy to try again. I have seen it (some time ago) but can't locate it at the moment.

Note: Duane Zimmerman was originally a purchaser, but changed his mind soon after and was bought out by the other two brothers in the same year.

This Indenture, Made this 3rd day of March in the year of our Lord One Thousand, Nine Hundred and Eight between Sydney Gorham Babson, Howard Duane Zimmerman and Rea Edwin Babson, all unmarried, of the County of Wasco, State of Oregon parties of the first part, and James M. Knight and Melvina Knight of the County of Wasco

State of Oregon, parties of the second part,

Witnesseth: That the said parties of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Four Thousand DOLLARS, to them in hand paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, have bargained, sold, aliened, released, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents do bargain, sell, alien, release, grant, convey and confirm, unto the said parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns forever, all the following described real estate, situated in Wasco County, Oregon, to-wit:

The South half of the Northwest quarter of Section Eight (8) Township One (1) South of Range Ten (10) East of the Willamette Meridian

And the said parties of the first part do covenant to and with said parties of the second part, their heirs and assigns, that he is the owner of the above granted premises in fee simple; that they are free from all incumbrances and that they will, and their heirs, executors and administrators, shall WARRANT and DEFEND said above granted premises unto the said parties of the second part, and unto their heirs and assigns forever, against the lawful claims and demands of all persons whomsoever.

This Instrument is intended as a MORTGAGE to secure the payment of the sum of \$ 4000⁰⁰

In Witness Whereof, _____ the Mortgagor above named, hereunto set their hands and seals this 3rd day of March A. D. 1908

Executed in the Presence of Howard Duane Zimmerman and Rea Edwin Babson
Witnesses to the signatures of Sydney Gorham Babson
N. B. Grubbe

Sydney Gorham Babson [SEAL.]
Howard Duane Zimmerman [SEAL.]
Rea Edwin Babson [SEAL.]
[SEAL.]

Witness to the signature of Rea Edwin Babson
D. Fredenburg

STATE OF OREGON,
County of Wasco } ss.

This Certifies, That on the 20th day of March 1908, personally appeared before the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for the County and State above named, Sydney Gorham Babson, Howard Duane Zimmerman, and Rea Edwin Babson all unmarried, ~~both unmarried,~~ personally known to me to be the identical persons named in and who executed the foregoing instrument and they acknowledged to me that they executed the same freely and voluntarily, for the uses and purposes therein mentioned.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and notarial seal, the day and year in this certificate last above written.

[SEAL.]

D. Fredenburg
Notary Public for Oregon.