

Oregon Century Farm & Ranch Program Awards 2020
Family Narratives
As of 8/19/20

Century Awards:

Blackman Ranch Inc: Founded in Klamath County in 1919 by TW Blackman.
Applicant is Rodney & Virginia Blackman.

In 1919, TW Blackman and his son Will came out to Oregon from Weleetka Oklahoma to look over irrigation prospects. Will purchased the 133-acre farm from Martha and Enola Hawkins in December 1919. Will and his wife Ina came out to Oregon on the train after this purchase. They had a lot of their household items and Will's tools shipped on the train from OK. They bought a walking plow, cultivator, two horses, a cow, a few pigs & chickens. The first crops other than the animals were potatoes and alfalfa. Ina really loved the ½ acre garden area and the chickens. Will was able to purchase 6 more horses after he sold some timberland in 1922. There was no tractor on the farm until 1925. The chickens were sold as fryers and eggs exchanged in town for groceries. They raised cattle until the late 1970's. The farm then transitioned to focus on the potatoes, wheat and alfalfa. Sugar beets were added in the 1990's. Today the farm continues to raise potatoes, wheat, and alfalfa with rotations of onions, garlic, and barley. Rod is the great grandson of the founder TW Blackman

Marx Farm: Founded in Polk County in 1920 by Julius & Luise Marx. Applicant is Merle Marx

In 1920, Julius and Luise purchased the first 138.5 acres of the farm in Polk County. They had been in Oregon since 1917. They added additional acres in the surrounding areas in 1926 and 1933. The early crops on the farm included a variety of livestock and grain crops. Grain, sheep, milk cows, horses, chickens, turkeys, farm forests/timber, hazelnuts, and prunes. Their son Emil and wife Verna bought the farm in 1937; that purchase included multiple pieces of equipment, livestock, feed, hay. Verna was raised on a farm that included strawberries but she was reluctant to let Emil plant any for quite a while but in the end he did and they achieved the 5-ton club award in strawberry production. The farm started raising cherries in the 1950's. Three of Emil's sons Fred, Merle, & Ron took over the operations in the 1970's through mid 1980's. Today the farm raises grass seed, small grains, peas, turnips, and radish for seed. They also have added new hazelnut varieties in the last 10 years. Merle's son Keith, who returned to farm in 2009, and his wife Tiffany have now taken over all the field crop ground while Merle and wife Carol operate the Hazelnut orchard. Merle is the grandson of the founders Julius & Luise Marx.

Paysinger Family Farm: Founded in Yamhill County in 1920 by George & Lizzie Shelburne.
Applicant is Theresa and David Paysinger

One hundred years ago, Theresa Paysinger's great grandmother and grandfather first began farming the land she and her family would eventually call home. In 1913, George and Lizzie Shelburne started their homestead in Unionvale, just outside of Dayton, Oregon. Seven years later in 1920 they purchased a 14-acre piece of land directly across the road. They started farming the property with corn, green beans, and other traditional row crops. The land became a family affair; in 1953 Lizzie, now a widow, handed over management to her son Claude. Claude and his wife Mae continued the tradition of farming that George had inspired. Their children, Bob, Jim, and Bonnie, helped work the farm after Claude retired. Eventually it would find its way to Theresa, Bob's eldest daughter. Together with her husband, David, they added a pole barn and a home in 1989 and in the mid-90s planted five acres of Pine trees on the property. The land also serves as home base for Blue Water Drilling, a well-drilling business started by Bob in 1964 and now

run and operated by Theresa and David. Theresa Paysinger is the great granddaughter of founders George and Lizzie Shelburne.

Starvation Farms: Founded in Morrow County in 1918 by Chris Moehnke. Applicant is Chris and Kathy Rauch

In 1889, Chris came to the Tacoma WA area from Ontario Canada. He and his wife Mary had a daughter in 1890 named Irene. Mary passed away in 1894 in Beaver Creek Oregon, Chris and daughter Irene moved to Eastern Oregon around 1916-18. He purchased the farm in April 1918. Daughter Irene married Julian Rauch in 1920. Chris and Julain worked together on the farm until about 1927 when Julian took it over completely. The early crops were cattle (Shorthorn), wheat, barley, and horses for farming. Irene and Julian had a son and daughter Irvin and Gene. Irvin expanded the farm by renting and purchasing parcels as he could. Irvin married Mildred Penney in 1947 and had 3 kids, Stanly, Tana and Chris. Julain and Irene moved to Hermiston in 1955 and the farm transitioned to Irvin in 1963. In the Late 1960's the farm fell on hard times, but by the early 1970's the farm had come around and Irvin was able to purchase another 1100 acres from a cousin. Irvin's son Chris came back to the farm in 1984 and worked with his father. Chris married Kathy Andre in 1988 and had 2 kids Andre and Natalie. He started to transition the farm to chem fallow no till practice in 1998. Irvin was one of the first to get a no till drill in Morrow County. Upon the passing of his parents Irvin and Mildred; Chris bought out his brother Stan's share and continued to work with his brother in law Steve Hill, until his retirement in 2018. The newest venture for the farm is wind and solar power. They continue to raise wheat, oats, barley and the 5th generation, Andre' has come back to start working with Chris as a partner in 2020. Chris is the great grandson of founder Chris Moehnke.

Roy Family Farm: Founded in Yamhill County in 1920 by Alfred Luke Roy. Applicant is Carol A. Roy

Alfred & Amelia Roy came to Oregon from Oklahoma in 1919 with 5 of their 8 children. Alfred rented a farm near Amity and also worked as a brick layer that first year. In November 1920 he purchased the farm just west of Carlton, originally part of the W.R. Johnson DLC. He said that it reminded him of his native France. Oldest son Cullen worked the farm after Alfred's death in 1924; he and his wife Mary (Hutchcroft) purchased it after the passing of his mother Amelia in 1938. The earliest crops on the farm were grain crops, hay, and pasture. Cullen and Mary purchased 12 head of registered Jersey cows and established a Grade A dairy. There were eventually 24 milking cows as well as dry cows and young stock. They sold milk to Carlton Creamery, which later became Farmers Cooperative Creamery (FCC) in McMinnville. They continued growing grain, hay, and pasture, and also kept chickens and turkeys and raised hogs on skim milk and acorns. Cullen and Mary's son Alvin and his wife Carol (Rowland) moved to the farm in 1966 with about a dozen registered cows and heifers of his favorite breed, the dual-purpose Milking Shorthorn. They operated a small dairy for nearly 30 years—also selling milk to FCC—before switching to cow-calf pairs. Since Al's death in 2013, Carol maintains the registered Milking Shorthorn herd and continues the farm operations with support from their grandson, Mitch Sitton. Carol's late husband Al was the grandson of founder.

Ward Ranches: Founded in Baker County in 1919 by Levi 'Clyde' Ward. Applicants are Craig, Mark, Kathy, & Ralph Ward

Clyde came from Wyoming to Oregon with his three brothers and widowed mother in 1903. He started raising potatoes in 1915 on land his mother had purchased. In 1919 he purchased 40 acres of land in Baker City. He married Leonora and they had two sons and a daughter. In 1943 son Alvin left his job in the Portland shipyards to farm full time with Clyde. Younger son Ralph returned from the Korean War to

farm full time in 1951. Daughter Charlotte was actively engaged as a landowner as well as ranch communications. The main crop on the farm has always been potatoes which have been grown continuously since Clyde's first 1915 crop. In the early years the farm also raised dairy, beef, hogs, chickens, sheep, horses, wheat and barley. A large garden provided food for family and work crew. From the 1950's to 1990's feeder cattle and a cow/calf operation was a huge part of the operation and included alfalfa and grass hay. The early 2000's brought a transition with the addition of peppermint and silage corn. Today's crops are potatoes, peppermint, wheat, hay, corn, and leased pasture. Ralph's wife, Alice, was the bookkeeper and an integral part of harvest operations. Ralph and Alice's sons, Mark, and Craig, began farming full time in the 1980s. Ralph is the son of the founder Clyde Ward; while Kathy, Craig, and Mark are grandchildren of the founder.

JW Ranch: Founded in Marion County in 1920 by John Calahan. Applicant is John W. Wells

John Calahan was born in 1877 in Missouri. His first roots in Oregon are when it was recorded he was a stage coach driver in the Salem area before moving to Albany area where he owned a Livery stable along the Willamette river. He and his wife Anna purchased the farm in October 1920. The early crops were carrots, potatoes, field corn, hay, cattle, horses, and hogs. John was known to love race horses and some of the ones he owned won numerous races. The farm was deeded to John's daughter Gladys took over he farm in 1948. Her son Larry took over in 1957 and raised a variety of cannery crops such as corn and bush beans. In 1981 Gladys asked John W. if he'd want to purchase the farm and he and his family moved onto property in 1983. Cattle continued to be raised until a disease devastated the herd. Hay for the animals also was a key crop as well. Larry continued to raise the field crops on about 40 acres. Sheep were introduced at this time as well; and continue to be raised today. John W. manages the land that now grows grass seed. John W. is the grandson of founder John Calahan.

Fir Villa Farm: Founded in Polk County in 1911 by Solomon S. and Susan Ediger. Applicants are Melvin & Esther Ediger

Solomon Ediger and his wife and 10 children came to Oregon in 1910 settling in Dallas area after farming in Kansas. They purchased the original farm of 51 acres in July 1911. He was actively involved in ministry as well and built the first Mennonite church in Dallas. The early crops on the farm included prunes, cattle, wheat, hay, corn, pigs, pasture, and horses for farming. Peter Ediger, Solomon's son took over the farm in 1936. In the 1940's the cattle numbers and pastureland was reduced and prune trees and the prune drier were removed and converted into more wheat fields. Melvin, son of Peter, took over the farm in 1983 and continues to manage it with his daughter Sylvia today. In the 1990's through early 2000's Melvin's wife Esther and daughter Sylvia ran the "Farmer's Daughter" growing and selling plants, produce, fresh flowers, and dried floral arrangements. Today the farm is leased and managed by Melvin for grass seed production, and daughter Sylvia has Fir Villa Bees and markets honey and bee by-products. Melvin is the grandson of the founder.

Sesquicentennial Awards:

Cooper Family Orchards: Founded in Wasco County in 1870 by Robert & Mary Cooper. Applicant is David Cooper

Robert Cooper and wife Mary came to Oregon in 1860 and helped his brother John for tree years before moving to The Dalles. Fear of a small-pox outbreak in the Portland area caused Robert to settle in The Dalles. Robert worked as a teamster, portaging freight around Celilo Falls. Robert came across Dry Hollow valley as he searched to find horses that had been turned out to pasture. He thought it would be a nice area to settle. Upon finding that there was land available to homestead Robert filed on 160 acres. He

would later purchase additional acreage to expand the farm. The early crops were horses, cattle, hay berries and tree fruits. The horses were primarily sold to local firms engaged in portaging freight around Celilo Falls. As the Railroads took over the transporting of freight and the need for draft horses declined the family began clearing the hillsides of scrub oak and pine trees to expand the tillable fields. Robert and Mary's son George, who had finished school and was working in Portland as a fruit broker returned to the farm in 1898 to help his father. The first sweet cherry trees were planted in about 1903, and cherries would eventually become the only commercial crop for many years. George encouraged his sons Glenn and Ralph to start their own farming operation, which they began just before the Great Depression struck. The partnership was short lived with Ralph becoming an Orthodontist and Glenn continuing to farm. After George's passing in 1959, Glenn bought out his brother and two sisters' interest in the Homestead. David (Glenn's son) joined his father on the farm in 1975 after a short stint teaching high school Ag Science. David assumed full control of the farm in the early 1980's after Glenn's passing. David and Karen's daughter Stacey is now in the process of taking over the management of the farm which is still mainly focused on cherries, but has added pears as a commercial crop. David is the great-grandson of the founder.