

CFR 0247

Mr. and Mrs. John Alvin

CENTURY FARM REGISTRATION

OREGON STATE FAIR -- SEPTEMBER 8, 1959

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- 1. Name: Mr. and Mrs. John Alvin
- 2. Postoffice Address: 2560 S. Santiam Hwy - Lebanon
- 3. County in which your farm is located: Linn
- 4. How old is your farm? 100. How old are you? 46.
- 5. Who founded your Century Farm? Martha and Mose Bland
- 6. How many miles did you travel to come today? 40 miles
- 7. Did you receive a Century Farm award at last year's State Fair? no
- 8. Do you have Century Farm land on both husband and wife sides of the family? husband's side
- 9. How many generations of your family live on the farm today? 3, 4 & 5th
- 10. How many exhibits do you have at the 1959 Oregon State Fair? no
 What are they? _____

- 11. How many years have you belonged to the Oregon Historical Society or your county Historical Society? none

Former stage, freight wagon stop

Farm moves to Lebanon

By GEORGE NEAVOLL
Lebanon Express Writer

Not many people know the big red barn and the tree-shrouded house on the South Santiam Highway near Southgate comprise a farmstead that has been in one family for more than a hundred years — a Century Farm.

Another fact adds to its distinction. It is probably the only Century Farm in the state that is within a city limits.

The farm of John and Marie Alvin at 2560 S. Santiam Hwy. has sheltered five generations — their son, John Jr., was the fifth. The 12 acres the Alvins presently own is only a fraction of the 380 acres Alvin's great-grandparents purchased in 1857 — two years before Oregon statehood.

The original property extended from the present-day Weldwood Park west to the vicinity of Stoltz Hill Road, and south from the present location of Lebanon Union High School to the Lebanon-Brownsville Road.

When the two sons of Moses and Martha Bland married, the 380 acres originally purchased from the David Watkins land

claim was divided between the two, and a lane that is now Walker Road became the dividing line.

It was John Bland who received the 190 acres that lay south of Walker Road, and who built the house, the Century Farm, in which his grandson lives today. Bland also was the builder of the old Steen place, off Vaughan Lane, which was swept this week by fire.

John Bland's brother, George Hester Bland, took up residence on the adjoining 190 acres.

The Bland family had come to Oregon by ox team, in a wagon train of some 50 families, when the boys were 5 (John) and 11 years of age. The family had left Indiana in Feb. 1851 with five yoke of oxen, one cow, one mare, and two black slaves, arriving in the Oregon Territory in September of that year.

The family originally settled on a donation land claim a mile-and-a-half west of Lebanon, but sold the property six years later to settle on the land they bought just south of the city.

The growth of Lebanon from

a village to a fair-sized city eventually engulfed the farm where the John Blands settled, and the Alvin's Century Farm now is within the city itself.

The farm was a stop for stage and freight wagons on the old Santiam Wagon Road, and the big red barn that still stands on the property housed the travelers' horses.

Mrs. Bland cooked for the stage passengers, and gave them lodging overnight in the house.

Each succeeding generation has remodeled both the house and the barn, but the basic structure and looks of each remain. Alvin, a welder by trade, recently walled the interior of the house with knotty-pine, but says he doesn't intend to do much to the exterior.

The old house, painted brown and trimmed with white, retains much of what must have been its original charm. A winding cobblestone path leads from what is now a traffic-clogged highway to the porchway, and tall trees shield it from all but the discerning traveler's view.

The house and its surround-

ing piece of acreage were left to the Blands' youngest daughter, Cynthia Mae, when she became Mrs. Walter Alvin. Her son, John, is the house's current occupant and her daughter, Betty Alvin Curtis, presently is principal of Santiam School.

Coincidentally, John's wife, Marie, is principal of Cascades School, which stands on the half of the original property that went to George Hester Bland. Black laborers helped to clear the land that eventually was planted to fruit trees, and in 1952, almost a hundred years later, it was these trees that themselves had to be cleared to make way for the school.

Owner of the property at the time it was sold to the school was the Loffie Arnolds. Mrs. Arnold was Pearl Bland Arnold, one of the daughters of George Hester Bland.

The Arnolds later sold a portion of their property for construction of a new high school for the city. Mrs. Arnold's parents before her also had been interested in education, and were credited with helping build the Santiam

Academy here.

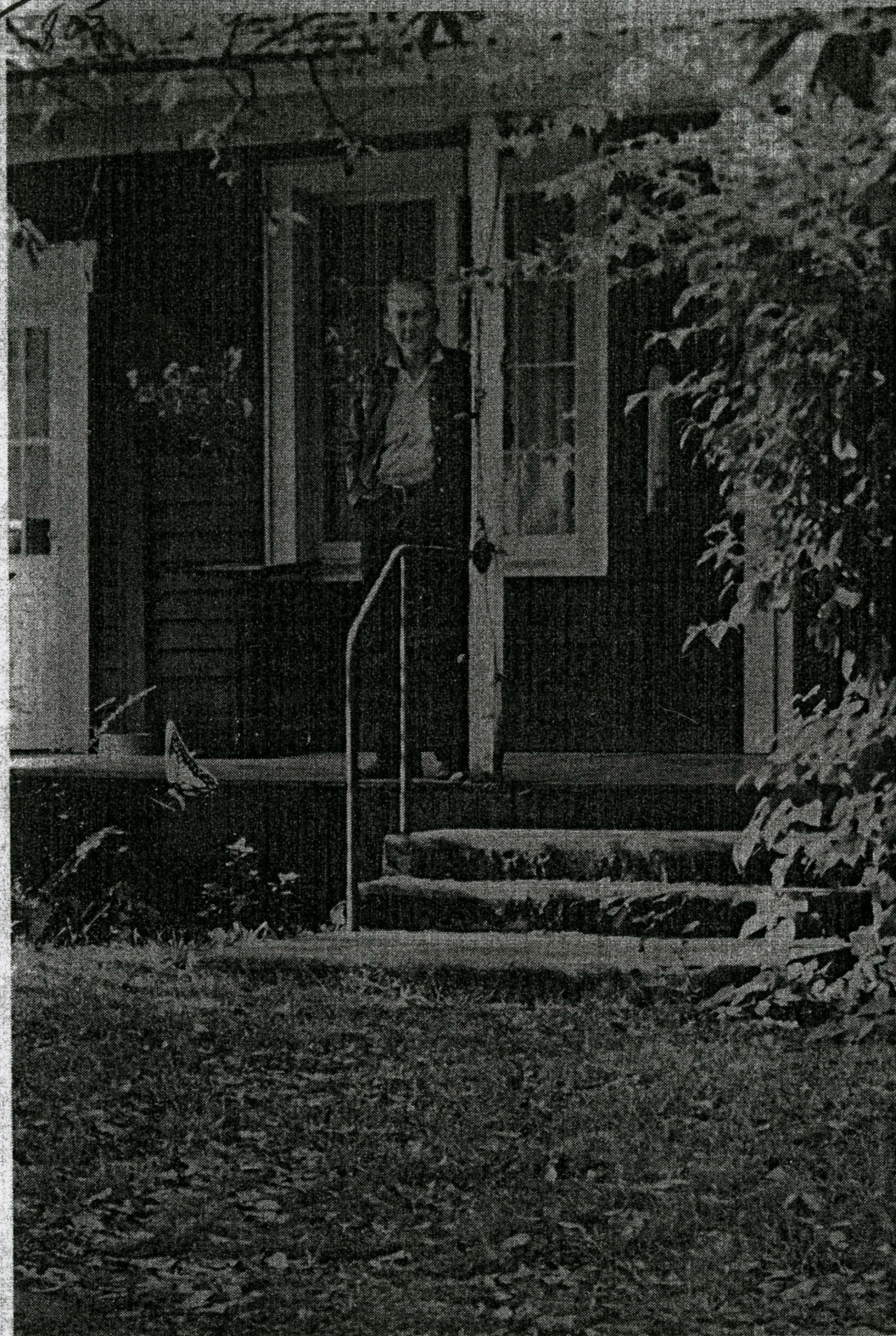
Both Bland brothers' tracts have been divided and subdivided, and only the Alvin property remains in family hands. Alvin still runs a few head of stock on the property, including a donkey, which probably draws the most attention from passers-by.

But farming no longer is the prime use of the land. Residential tracts abound in the area, as do private businesses. Alvin himself has a welding shop on the north end of his property. Southgate Shopping Center is the chief landmark today of the old Bland holdings.

"There wasn't a lot of houses around here in those days," Alvin recalls of his childhood on the farm. "Most of it was farming ground."

When Alvin was about 12, electricity was installed in the house. When he was married, he constructed bathroom facilities.

Except for these changes, the old house looks about the same as it has for the past 113 years. Thus far spared the ravages of time, it well could be headed for its second century.



John Alvin stands on the porch of the Century Farm that has been in his family for 113 years at 2560 S. Santiam Hwy. It probably is unique as a Century Farm being within city limits. The farm was recognized by the Oregon Historical Society in Oregon's centennial year in 1959 for its "enduring service in the finest agricultural tradition of the state."—Express photo