

CFR 0313

Albena Lanius

APPLICATION FOR CENTURY FARM HONORS

Location and size of farm South east of Brooks Ore

Present owner Albena Moisan Larinus

Address Brooks

Do you live on this farm and farm the land? Live here but rent the land

Do you make \$150 a year or more from this farm? Yes

If you live off this land, do you manage the farm operation? Yes

Name and date of first generation owner Thomas Moisan
July 4-1842

Brief Description of farm 80 acres of grain and seed - part of Donation of 640 acres of Thomas Moisan -

History My home is the house erected by my grandfather Thomas Moisan in 1856

Albena Larinus
Signature of present owner

STATE OF OREGON)

SS

COUNTY OF MARION)

On this 17 day of July, 1958, before me,
a notary public, the undersigned officer, personally
appeared Albena Lanning
known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to
the within instrument and acknowledged that s he
executed the same for the purposes therein contained.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I hereunto set my hand and official
seal.

SEAL

Notary Public for Oregon

My Commission Expires Jan. 22, 1960

Marion

Northwest

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Oregon's First Farmer Settled Near Brooks

Brooks — Oregon's first farmer was Thomas Moisan who settled in the Brooks area back in 1842, according to recent research by Robert Steward, director of the state department of agriculture, and Thomas Vaughn, state historical society director. Furthermore the Moisan claim is still owned by four direct descendants of the original owner—Arthetta Moisan Barcus, Albena Moisan Lanius and Albert P. and Agnes Moisan Mys, all of Brooks, and Edythe M. Cary of Salem.

The discovery was made in connection with selection of Century Farmers as a promotion for the 1959 Oregon Centennial celebration. A total of 332 farmers representing 210 farms settled by the ancestors of the certified claimants more than 100 years ago. Present-day owners either live on and farm the land, or manage the farm operations.

Climax of the Century Farm program will come September 2 at the annual state fair. The Century Farmers will be honored and the day "fittingly observed even to an old time picnic in the old camp grounds at the state fair."

Oldest Oregon 'Century Farm'

Moisan's Claim Of 1842 Vintage

By Jack Zimmerman
Journal Staff Writer

When a squawling, red-faced French-Canadian baby was born near Montreal in 1810, it is unlikely his parents had heard the word—Oregon.

But as it celebrates its first hundred years, the 33d state honors that infant, Thomas Moisan, as one of its founding fathers. Although little-publicized, Moisan was founder of Oregon's oldest "Century Farm," a designation created last year by the Oregon Historical society and the state department of agriculture.

His farm north of Salem, near Banks, is first on a list that commemorates beginners of the state's oldest—and still second-largest industry, agriculture.

THOUGH his parents probably knew little of Oregon at his birth, Thomas Moisan was born on the eve of the state's greatest era of exploration and development. The only one of 10 children from

an old and respected family of Quebec merchants and tradespeople to journey to the United States, his shoulders were destined to rub with those of contemporaries more commonly credited with winning this portion of the Far West.

NEWS OF THIS land was mainly reports of a fabulous fur trade that would eventu-

ally lure Moisan, as it did hundreds of his French-Canadian compatriots.

When Moisan was a lad of 8, the British and Americans agreed to joint occupancy of Oregon. A quarter of a century later Thomas Moisan helped erase this situation by participating in the vote for provincial government at Champoege in 1843. In between were the events that led to his founding of the state's oldest Century Farm.

Through a family or business connection, Moisan made his way in 1838 to New Orleans where he joined the American Fur Co., that indomitable band of trappers who spawned so many of Oregon's progeny. In the next two years he crossed the "Great Stony" (Rocky) mountains and went to work for McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver. He worked for the Hudson's Bay Co. a short time however, before deciding to stake a claim of his own.

Today that claim is still occupied and being productively farmed by his grandchildren. And living in the 103-year-old, two-story frame home he erected for his bride is a granddaughter, Mrs. Albena Moisan Lanus.

FADED documents date the Moisan claim from 1842, making it the oldest of Oregon's Century Farms. But surrounding each of the more than 200 in the state are remnants of the rich heritage left by their founders through participation in early-day government, agricultural development and foundations of life as we know it today. Their names are visible on street signs, cornerstones of the oldest buildings, in titles of businesses and fixed to geographic locations.

In Moisan's time single men could claim 320 acres of the Oregon Country free. Married men could have 640 acres.

Unless they brought wives with them, many of Thomas Moisan's contemporaries were hard-pressed to find spouses with whom to share the larger land holding. This was not the case, however, with the founder of the Moisan farm, whose breeding and education set him apart from many as a member of frontier aristocracy.

In 1842 he wed 18-year-old Henrietta, daughter of Andreas Longtain, one of the most famed of the French-Canadian trappers who had



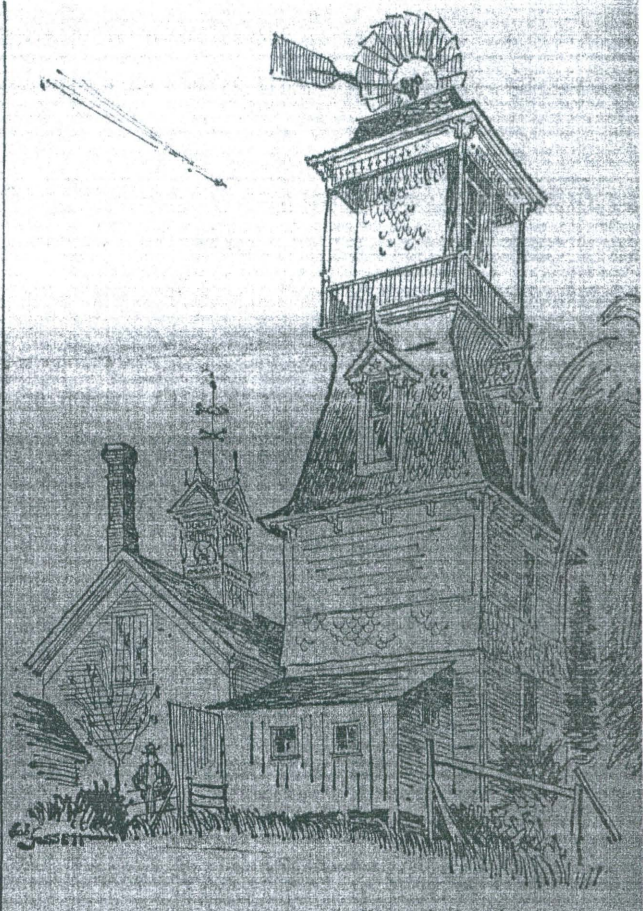
OLDEST CENTURY farm boasts this 103-year-old dwelling still used by granddaughter of builder. Built by Thomas Moisan in 1856, stately structure is visible just south of Brooks looking eastward from highway 99E. Genteel French-Canadian founder of farm even had indoor bathroom when such facilities were rarity in Oregon country. House now is occupied by Mrs. Albena Moisan Lanus. Its hand-hewn timbers and planks were shaped and put together over two-year construction period.

been in the Oregon country since Moisan's birth. Henrietta was born in Fort Vancouver shortly after its initial settlement. Her father, like the younger Moisan, had despaired of trapping and turned to the land. His claim adjoined that of Robert Newell on the banks of the Willamette and is today the site of Champoege state park.

Even if he had wanted, young Moisan would have had a hard time dodging politics of the time, what with a father-in-law who played host to the most rabid Americans of the period.

MOISAN and his bride are linked to Oregon's beginnings in other respects as well. A witness at their Catholic wedding at St. Paul was Francis Rivet, one of two members of the Lewis & Clark expedition who stayed in Oregon in 1806 when all the others turned east. At Henrietta's baptism a sponsor was Jean Baptiste Dubrulle, an Astor "overlander," who had been in the Oregon country since 1812.

Descendants say Moisan's wife brought her dolls along when she moved into the crude log hut he erected on his claim and it was her husband



Sketches by Journal Artist Bob Fassett

NEAR HISTORIC Champoege State park on Willamette river stands picturesque old farmhouse of Hoeffer & Zorn farm. Though not on Century Farm rolls, farm dates back to 1850s and is currently managed by a grandnephew of one of its founders. House is some 70 years old, was remodeled in 1890s, contains 20 rooms. Windmill, typical of era when it was erected, is attached to house and is as ornate as dwelling.

who taught her to read and write.

But meager beginnings are misleading. Moisan had picked his 640 acres for its ability to produce grain and graze. He reaped as many as 80 bushels of wheat to the acre and was known as the "Cattle King" of the area. Correspondence available today testifies to his extensive business, but at the same time he was considered something of a benefactor to other settlers, loaning them seed for their first crops instead of attempting to make a profit off his new neighbors.

HIS PROGRESSIVE ways earned him the title of "American" long before he officially adopted citizenship because he utilized four-wheeled wagons instead of the two-wheeled ox-carts of his fellow French-Canadians. He was widely known as a gentleman and in 1856 the construction of the home now occupied by Mrs. Lanus made Thomas Moisan something of a local squire.

Supported by a sturdy brick foundation, its wooden beams and planks were hand-hewn in two years by artisans of

the time. The present house is only a fraction of its original bulk. Wooden pillars support wide porches stretching the length of both stories across its front and atop the dwelling is a cupola-steeple from which its owner could watch his herds and the periodic approach of the overland stage as it rumbled between Portland and Salem.

AS YOU TOUR Moisan house you feel the regard the pioneer had for the civilization he had left in Montreal. Prudent for its time, the house has no fireplaces. It abhorred the fact his bride had to cook over an open fire in their first home of log chinked with straw and clay. He had not only stoves, but an indoor bathroom! A voracious reader, his remaining correspondence is studded with receipts for subscriptions to periodicals and newspapers from the East.

Though but one of thousands who settled the West, Moisan helps dispel the ageless caricature of untidy, uncouth and unshaven Western pioneers.

Albena Moisan Lanus

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