

CFR 0426

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde H. McKenzie

CFR0426

U.S. Census Definition of a Farm: 10 acres or more with agricultural sales of \$50 or more a year; or, if less than 10 acres, sales of at least \$250 a year.

APPLICATION FOR CENTURY FARM HONORS--1970  
(Rules attached)

Deadline for filing application: July 1, 1970

PLEASE PRINT

Your name (Mr., Mrs., Miss) MR. & MRS CLYDE H. MCKENZIE

Your address: Route 1 P.O. Box 9 Town SUMMERVILLE

Location of farm: Rt 1 Box 9 Summerville UNION  
(Address) (County)

Acres in your farm today: 860 Acres in original farm: 160

Does your farm comply with U.S. Census definition at top of page? yes

Name of founder of farm (please print): TOLBERT T. GLENN

Year founder settled on farm? 1868 Where did he come from? Wapello, Iowa

How many families have farmed this land? 3

Are any of original buildings still in use? YES

Who farms land today? You? X A renter?        A manager?        Other? AND SON

If you own the farm but live in town, do you manage the farming operation?       

What relation are you to the original owner? MRS. MCKENZIE IS THE DAUGHTER

If you know crops or livestock raised on farm 100 years ago, please list HOGS, CATTLE,  
HAY, WHEAT, BARLEY, OATS

What do you raise on farm today? CATTLE, WHEAT, BARLEY, OATS, GREEN PEAS

How many generations live on the farm today? (Names) MR. & MRS. CLYDE H. MCKENZIE ( MYRA J. GLENN), MR. & MRS. GLEN R. MCKENZIE ( GRANDSON)

Has the farm ever been rented? PART How many times has original farm been divided? 1

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

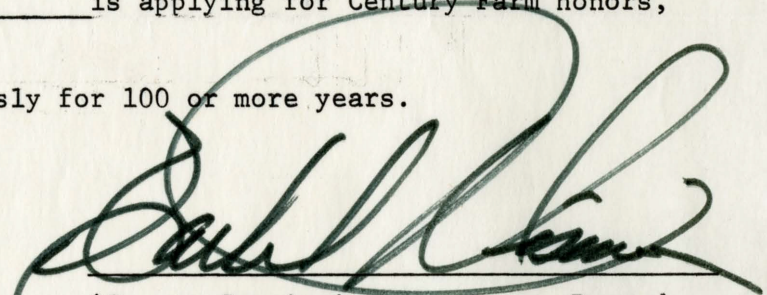
Clyde H. McKenzie  
Mrs Myra McKenzie  
Signature of Owner

State Department of Agriculture  
Oregon Historical Society

CERTIFICATION OF OWNERSHIP OF CENTURY FARM

I hereby certify that the farm for which MR AND MRS CLYDE H. MCKENZIE  
Owner's name and address  
RT 1 BOX 9  
SUMMERVILLE, OR. is applying for Century Farm honors,

has been in his family continuously for 100 or more years.



~~\*County Commissioner~~  
**JUDGE** Recorder

Date: 29 JUNE 1970

\*Please strike office not applicable

**Rick Read - Published Glenn Century Farm Article by Trish & Dave Yerges, Union Co.**

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**From:** "David Yerges" [Redacted for Privacy]  
**To:** "Rick Read" <rickr@ohs.org>  
**Date:** 11/16/2000 7:35 AM  
**Subject:** Published Glenn Century Farm Article by Trish & Dave Yerges, Union Co.

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## **The Glenn Century Farm**

**By Trish Yerges**

"It should really be called the Glenn Century Farm because it was my grandfather who first owned it. And for that matter, this road should be called Glenn Lane," explained Glen McKenzie, present owner of his family's century farm on McKenzie Lane west of Summerville.

McKenzie is talking about his mother's father, Tolbert T. Glenn, who was granted the 160 acre farm from the U.S. Government on January 5, 1875. Glenn was born in Wapello, Iowa on June 22, 1844 to William S. and Maria (Yates) Glenn. Maria died in 1849 when Glenn was barely five years old. The family remained in Iowa after her death and Glenn finished his education there. His widowed father supported the family as a merchant in Pleasantville, Iowa, but he became increasingly tempted by the highly publicized homestead opportunities out West. Consequently, in 1862, eighteen year old Glenn came with his widowed father and siblings across the plains to the Grande Ronde Valley where he resided on his father's homestead claim near Summerville. There Glenn participated in the two family enterprises, farming and freighting goods from Portland to Umatilla and sometimes to the mines of Idaho.

Two years later in 1864, another family arrived in the Valley, the Henry and Louisa Meyers family including their daughter, Sarah, who Glenn married on September 20, 1868 in Union County. During their marriage, Glenn and his wife, Sarah, had eight children: C. Edwin, William, Arthur, Guy, Williard B., Hattie, Daisy, Minnie, and Myra.

In 1871, a few years after Glenn was settling into family life in this valley, his father and brothers moved on to Malheur City where they again established a merchantile business. Later Glenn's father started the town of Plannville, Oregon. He died May 9, 1900 in Vale Oregon. Meanwhile in 1875 when Glenn was granted his own homestead claim, about one mile west of Summerville, he immediately built a two story house on it. The ground floor of the house had a living room, three bedrooms, a kitchen with a sink, a pantry, a fire place and heating stove, a lavatory and tub. The house even had plumbing, gravity fed from a stream about one mile up the road. Upstairs were three more bedrooms. Around the house were large porches and outside was the proverbial outhouse. It was indeed a grand home for its time. Aside from the house, there was at least one barn.

Glenn's farm was as self-sufficient as he could make it. He raised beef cattle, chickens and pigs. He also had plenty of horses for the field work. "He was a real entrepreneur because his farm grew to 1,300 acres. The Bill Teeter farm was part of his property then. My grandfather owned land from here almost to Imbler," said McKenzie.

In Glenn's day just prior to the turn of the century, the cost of living and wages were lower yet proportionate. This made life simpler in some respects yet challenging enough to keep a man busy in the pursuit of family support. For example, in 1895, while wages were then \$1.00 a day, dinner was 15 cents and a necessary pair of overalls 25 cents. Baled hay sold for \$7.00 a ton, bacon 8 cents per pound, ham 10 cents per pound, butter 12 cents per pound, live beef 2 cents per pound, a box of peaches sold for 50 cents, and a box of plums 30 cents.

It was in this kind of world that Glenn spent his life. He lived on his homestead concentrating on the farm and his family. Though he never served in public office, he was moderately involved in community service as road supervisor and director in the school district. After Glenn's death on May 20, 1900, the Glenn farm was divided among his eight children. His wife, Sarah, continued living on the homestead raising the youngest of their children including Myra, then 12 years of age.

Myra Glenn was born in the original Glenn house in 1888, the youngest of the family. In 1913 she married Clyde McKenzie and together they lived with her aging mother on the Glenn homestead. When Sarah Glenn

died in 1918, Myra and Clyde were given the home place, and over the years, they bought out all but three of the other Glenn heirs. From this time forward the farm was known as the McKenzie farm.

Clyde McKenzie was born and raised on the Roderick McKenzie farm west of Imbler. He was one of three sons born to Roderick and Isabella (Thomson) McKenzie. "Roderick McKenzie, was an interesting fellow," McKenzie said of his grandfather. He was born in Scotland and at age 9 or 10 his father died. At that young age he became an apprentice sailor in association with his uncle. He eventually sailed the Great Lakes and that's how he came to America.

"He had three wives during his life," McKenzie explained. In 1858, Roderick and his first wife, Margaret "Maggie" Ross, lived in the Dominion of Canada. In 1859 Roderick McKenzie and Margaret moved to Illinois, and in 1863 they left Illinois, traveling the Oregon Trail to the Grande Ronde Valley. They raised three children: James A., Maggie's son who came into the marriage with her and two children from her marriage to Roderick, Donald and Katherine.

When Margaret died, Roderick wrote a letter to his hometown in Scotland asking Miss Isabella Thomson to come to America to marry him. She did and she became mother to Alek, Clyde and LeRoy. When Isabella died, Roderick wrote back to Scotland again, this time to ask Isabella's sister, Mary Thomson, to come here to marry him, and she did. They had no children together, but she became Clyde's step-mother. "So my Dad's aunt was also his step-mother," McKenzie said with a chuckle.

Roderick also had a busy livery in Summerville from around 1880 until about 1953. It was known as "The Anchor", a name that whispered of Roderick's past sailing occupation and perhaps signified his choice of final settlement where he "dropped anchor". Roderick's son, Clyde McKenzie, often worked at the livery on weekend evenings when courting couples rented horses and buggies. Occasionally, empty rented buggies found their way back to the livery without their courting passengers and sheepish couples had to walk back to the livery to claim their rig. Even though Clyde was often working on weekends when other young men were busy courting, he did learn solid work ethics that helped him pay for the Studebaker cars he enjoyed over the years and also helped him develop the Glenn farm into the 860 acre operation it is today.

In the 1920s, Clyde and Myra took several steps to further develop the Glenn farm. In 1924, they became a member of the Registered Hereford Cattle Association. They also completed a number of construction projects on the farm including the building of a machine shed, hog house and chicken house. The early barns built by Tolbert Glenn started on fire during the 1930s from the spontaneous combustion of damp hay. "In those days there was no way of stopping a fire like that. You just had to let it burn out," McKenzie explained. So Clyde undertook their necessary reconstruction during the Depression years, and these structures along with the others sheltered his dairy cows, chickens, geese, pigs, beef cattle and horses. His annual crops were usually the same each year: wheat, barley, oats and alfalfa.

"During the Depression no one had money, and wheat was selling at 25 cents a bushel, yet we lived pretty well on the farm," McKenzie reflected. In fact, Clyde McKenzie contracted with local carpenter, John Lewis, during the early thirties to start construction on his new house. This took a couple of years, but by 1934 it was completed. The old Glenn house was moved back on the property, and this gave the family a place to live during the construction of the new house. After the new house was completed, the old house was used as a shed until its eventual collapse. "And this was all done during the Depression," McKenzie pointed out.

The construction of the new house is so solid that McKenzie said, "There's enough wood in this house for two houses." The McKenzie house was built with a modern bathroom and septic tank. In 1935 the house had electricity. "We had electricity fairly early," McKenzie said, but prior to electricity and refrigerators, the McKenzie home had the common "ice box". "The winters were more severe in those years than they are today," McKenzie said, and because of this fact, it was possible for ice blocks two or three feet thick to be sawed out of the Grande Ronde River. The blocks were packed in sawdust and hauled by wagon to the McKenzie farm. There the blocks were stored in an ice house made with 3 foot thick walls insulated with saw dust. This ice house preserved the ice supply all summer long. Besides ice block refrigeration methods, the McKenzies also used smoking as a way of preserving foods for longer periods of time. Their smokehouse was used primarily for curing and preserving hams and bacon. "Green willows smoke real good, and that's what was used in the smokehouse," McKenzie explained.

The McKenzies always had a large garden including potatoes, carrots, cabbages, radishes, peas, sweet corn, berries and string beans. At harvest time, Myra kept busy canning the perishable vegetables and fruits while storing the root vegetables in the root cellar through the winter.

Farm life was not all work and no play, however. The McKenzies enjoyed several forms of entertainment

with their neighbors. Reminiscing, McKenzie said, "My folks probably had the first radio in this area. I think that was 1924. We listened to KDKA out of Pittsburgh. We had neighbors from all around coming to the house to listen to it. It got pretty busy here." Besides being entertained by the radio, the McKenzies enjoyed playing at pinochle parties with their neighbors. "But ice skating was really a big thing here. We'd have a huge bonfire, and you could skate from Imbler all the way to Elgin," McKenzie said.

When the McKenzies made trips into La Grande, it was not just a buying excursion, but an opportunity to sell farm produce as well. Hopefully their sales would exceed expenditures and make the trip a profitable one. Myra prepared dressed chickens to sell and brought along canned preserves as well. The farm family had to be resourceful and make their infrequent trips into town ones of combined purposes.

Clyde and Myra McKenzie had one child, Glen McKenzie, who was born in the original Glenn house and delivered by midwife, Frieda Fries. "She delivered a lot of babies in this area," McKenzie said. He was trained early to help on the farm. "I remember having chores to do around the farm such as milking cows with mother every evening. I also fed the animals and hauled wood," said McKenzie of his youthful years on his parent's farm.

McKenzie, his father and one hired man were kept busy year round on their farm. The busiest time of year occurred in the late summer at harvest time. Additional help was hired at a wage of \$1.00 a day plus room and board during harvest time. Threshing crews of 7 men or more were needed, many of them single men who were living in Summerville. Often these men slept under shelter in the field so that they could start again early the next morning. A cook shack was set up by the creek and near the workers for easy cleaning of cookware and dishes. Percheon-drawn mowing and racking machines were used to harvest the grain crops. Hay was piled by hand and later stacked by hand in the barn. Grain was all hand bagged in those days. The farm required a lot of horses, and although most farmers cared for the medical needs of their own horses, occasionally it was necessary for a horse to be treated by veterinarian, Dr. Riley, of La Grande.

Horses were used heavily during harvest, but also during the winter months when it was necessary to take hay out twice a day to feed the cattle. Young McKenzie and his father spent about three hours in the morning and then again in the afternoon pitching hay off a horse-drawn wagon to 100 hungry head of cattle. The era of horses ended happily for most farmers with the introduction of the tractor.

"I was in high school when Dad got his first tractor. When the tractors came on the scene, the horses left. We had at least 20 horses. The driving and saddle horses were mostly Morgans then. Now they are Quarter and Arabian horses. Anyway, we weren't sad to see them go," McKenzie said.

McKenzie's involvement with the farm during his high school years was understandably limited since he lived with his aunt in La Grande while attending La Grande High School. After graduating, he attended Eastern College, which was then a two year junior college. During those years of education, McKenzie developed a keen interest in the theatrical arts.

His exposure to the arts was initiated by his mother, who was a real advocate of the arts. She enjoyed playing piano as well as going to the movie theater. She often took young McKenzie along as her date to the Starr Theater, now called Granada Theater in La Grande. "She loved the movies and would take me with her," recalled McKenzie. By this practice, a love for the theater was instilled in him from an early age. In addition to his mother's strong influence in theater, there were other role models McKenzie recalled. During the 1920s when McKenzie attended his elementary school years at Pleasant Grove in Summerville, he was always involved with the many holiday plays that were put on there. Then at La Grande High School, drama teacher, Kitty Sartine, was another strong influence upon young McKenzie's desire for the theater. When he entered Eastern in the mid 1930's, he continued in the theater under the direction of drama teacher, Helen Graham.

As an adult, McKenzie continued acting at what was then called the "La Grande Little Theater", a community theater for adult citizens. "The Little Theater was part of the Works Progress Administration instituted by President Roosevelt. Actually things like theaters were started before (WPA) construction projects," McKenzie explained. The theater was popular in the Grande Ronde Valley until after WWII when it was disbanded.

It was when McKenzie was a cast member in "East Lynn" at The La Grande Little Theater that he met Miss Jean Williams, a public school English and Drama teacher. Jean taught in Cove for one year and in La Grande from 1934-1941. Then the War began and both became involved, McKenzie in the Army Air Force's Central Flying Command and Jean as a volunteer in the Red Cross. It wasn't until after the war was over that their two lives were reunited and the theater became a strong bond between them again.

McKenzie (30) and Jean Williams (37) were married on July 4, 1947 at 701 Washington Avenue in La

Grande and they lived on the Clyde McKenzie farm property but not initially in the home place because Clyde and Myra were still living there. The Glen McKenzies took over operation of the family farm in 1960. Myra died in 1971 and Clyde in 1976 leaving a large ranch to the young couple. "I tell people we're into biscuits, beer and boards now," McKenzie said with a smile. Soft wheat, barley and timber are McKenzie's main crops.

With wheat prices the way they are today, it's the timber McKenzie sells that has been supporting the farm for the past two years. "Wheat is selling at \$2.88 a bushel, the same price it sold for fifty years ago," McKenzie said. "A farmer would be lucky to get a nickel out of a loaf of bread," he added. "During the 1950s, when costs were lower, the farm netted more," McKenzie recalled.

Besides his crops, he also raises 120 head of beef cattle, making his farm an operation which requires a full time employee. Dan Feathergill, of Pumpkin Ridge Road near Summerville, has been helping McKenzie as a full time employee for many years. McKenzie also hires a part-time Ag student from Eastern each year.

Despite the challenges for today's farmer, McKenzie persists in his operation with a few adjustments including "no till" farming. To McKenzie, the farm is more than a business, it has been "home" for the past three generations, and a place that gave meaning and brought satisfaction to a life of hard work.

From Tolbert Glenn to Clyde McKenzie to Glen McKenzie, the family has endured in farming their 1875 homestead claim. To mark this achievement, McKenzie helped his father to apply for the Century Farm Certificate and today its record is kept with the State Historical Society in Portland. The farm is just one part of the McKenzies' lifetime achievements. There are many, but if you attend a theatrical performance at Loso Hall on the campus of Eastern, you might very well be sitting in the Glen and Jean McKenzie Theater. "I still go pretty often to the symphony there," McKenzie says.

Despite the passing of generations, including Jean's death in 1993, the Glenn Century Farm will survive, as the land always does, and it will one day belong to Eastern Oregon University. Explaining why his prized family farm will be given to the University, McKenzie said, "We [Jean and I] had no heirs and we wanted to keep the farm in one piece." So in 1988, McKenzie established the "Oregon Agriculture Foundation", a subsidiary of the EOSC Foundation which will own the farm and hire a manager to operate it after McKenzie is gone. McKenzie has stipulated that the farm will not be used for experimental agricultural purposes, but it will be run as usual. It is the foundation's purpose to use the farm's profits for university scholarships or for other academic needs. In this way, McKenzie feels assured that the Glenn Century Farm will sow "academic" seeds for future generations to harvest.

Rick Read - Published Photos for Glenn Century Farm by Dave Yerges, Union Co.

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**From:** "David Yerges" [Redacted for Privacy]  
**To:** "Rick Read" <rickr@ohs.org>  
**Date:** 11/16/2000 7:37 AM  
**Subject:** Published Photos for Glenn Century Farm by Dave Yerges, Union Co.

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Caption#2 - McKenzie Barns built during the Depression years  
Caption#8 - Original Glenn House built c.1875  
Caption#10- Glen and Jean McKenzie  
Caption#11 - Tolbert Glenn's Freight Wagons  
Caption#12 - House Built by Clyde McKenzie 1930s  
Caption#15 - Roderick & Isabella McKenzie with sons, Clyde, Alek and LeRoy







