

CFR 0455

William Robinson

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TOUR OF CENTURY FARMS IN WASHINGTON COUNTY
June 24, 1959

Robinson Farm

The Robinson farm was settled by Chet and Bill's great grandfather, W. J. Robinson, in 1853. Lumber from some of the early buildings is still in use in some of the structures on the farm. The farm, which is now a dairy and general field crops operation, had one of the early milk routes in Portland and for many years produced primarily hay and grain. Much of the hay was sold in livery stables in Portland. The hay crop consisted of Timothy and clover.

In the early 1900's, the farm had a purebred Holstein herd which was sold out in 1926. In 1927, they went into sheep operation. In 1931-32, they went into purebred Guernseys as a result of Chet's enrolling in 4-H club work. Irrigation was started in 1948 with the building of the first of three storage dams on a small drainage stream that runs through the farm. The three dams now have a storage capacity of ten acre feet. This is one stream in which the flow has improved during the summer as a result of suburban development in the upper drainage area. Twenty-five acres receive full irrigation annually and some thirty acres partial irrigation.

The annual cash costs per cow for operating a dairy herd in Washington county range from \$250 and up annually, including hay, grain, pasture, breeding costs, transportation and selling costs, taxes, insurance and repairs, veterinary medicine and supplies.

Bowlby Farm

The Fred Bowlby farm was settled by Howard's great grandfather, Dr. Wilson Bowlby, in 1853. Some of the early farming is uncertain but by 1900, the Bowlbys say the farm had been grained to death. At that time, they started in the dairy operation, growing Red clover and other field crops for the dairy herd and started building up the land with manure. The dairy operation was given up in 1932 because of a severe outbreak of mastitis, for which there was no satisfactory control at that time.

They then went into the chicken and turkey business including one of the fine turkey breeding farms in Oregon and continued in this until 1949 at which time they shifted over to vegetable and small fruit crops which they were able to establish because of irrigation in 1948. They now irrigate between 70 and 100 acres annually. The crops now consist of $10\frac{1}{2}$ acres of strawberries, 9 acres of beans, 28 acres of sweet corn, and 15 acres of cannery squash. They still produce some grain -- 15 acres of wheat, 25 acres of barley, 20 acres of oats, and 20 acres of clover hay. This farm today produces more per acre than any time in its history.

ADDITIONAL DATA

Cash Costs for Bean Production - Enterprise Data

A grower will spend between \$700 and \$1000 per acre to produce pole beans. Included in this cost are supplies such as seed, fertilizer, weed sprays, poles, wire, stakes, insecticides, hired labor and gas and oil, all of which provide business and labor income in the county. Mr. Bowlby spent \$9,000 for labor, alone.

Growers select fields for the crop and then prepare soils in advance of seeding; planning rotations several years in advance is common practice. Seeding must be done when soil conditions are right and the weather cooperates. Before planting beans, a grower must have a contract or market outlet. He must understand soil tests and be able to get and apply the proper fertilizer to make the best production under his conditions. Each farm usually must be treated differently, Irrigation schedules must be established to maintain proper moisture level in soil and to avoid having the field too wet when it is ready to be picked. Weed chemicals must be accurately applied in the proper mix for the kinds of weeds that are a problem, at the right time. The same applies to insect control and disease control.

Cash Costs for Strawberry Production

Included are plants, fertilizer, insecticides, gas and oil, irrigation, and weed chemicals. Cash expenditures per acre by strawberry growers will range from \$375 to \$600 per acre. Mr. Bowlby spent \$400 per acre on labor to harvest his berries.

Cash Costs for Sweet Corn

Range from \$80 to \$140 per acre.

Variations in costs in each of these enterprises are determined by soil fertility which will determine the amount of fertilizer necessary, irrigation costs, chemicals needed for weed control, insect and pest control, disease control, cost of labor, and numerous other items including management.

Today's truck crop and small fruit farmer may handle a group of fertilizers ranging from one or two to as high as six or eight different types. He must know what is needed and when to use it. In weed chemicals, he must be familiar with the rates of application and the types of weeds that need to be controlled in the different crops, which may necessitate knowing about eight or ten different weed chemicals.

Insecticides. Depending upon the insect problem in the specific crop, a farmer may need to know about how and when to apply from four to ten different types of insecticides. He must be familiar with and understand irrigation. He must have a good bookkeeping system, keep track of each employee, maintain good public relations with anywhere from a dozen to 150 pickers, keep track of social security numbers, and many other records kept by any business. He must keep track of from ten to twenty different types of equipment and keep them in repair and operation when needed.

Vegetable farmers such as this supported tremendous industries in surrounding areas in addition to the labor hired, including such items as fertilizers; insecticides; fungicides; weed chemicals; wire, poles and stakes; gasoline, oil, and tires irrigation equipment; farm machinery, which may run from \$25,000 to \$50,000 per farm; and many other miscellaneous items in addition to the processing industry.

OREGON JOURNAL
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Chamber Tour Visits State Century Farms

SALEM, June 25.—A century farm that has never been mortgaged and has instead entirely remained debt-free since being settled in 1852 got the attention of the Portland Chamber's touring agricultural committee as the group made its first of several visits on pioneer farms en route here.

The farm first settled by W. H. Robinson is located in Washington county's Progress community southwest of Portland and is now operated by the Chet and Bill Robinson families.

This farm, long devoted to dairying, had one of Portland's early day milk routes. Today the Robinsons have the latest in labor saving mechanized dairying, including a chain belt which carries silage to the cows.

HISTORY OF early day fruit growing, when apples sold for 20 cents a pound, was reviewed by L. R. Alderman, 87, Dayton century farm

owner, when the group toured his place.

The present owner's father, Albert L. Alderman, settled on the land claim in 1846 and at one time had the largest orchard. But the pioneer orchard had long since been replaced by irrigated pastures and dairying is the present enterprise.

Modern day big-scale farming got attention at the noon-hour visit to the U. S. Alderman farms, Dayton. Here the group saw the processing of flavorland strawberries.

These farms have a \$1,000,000 yearly payroll and during peak harvest periods employ more than 2200 people.

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