

CFR 0884

Jean and Lowell Hutchinson

Postmarked
4/29 UNION

APPLICATION FOR CENTURY FARM HONORS

Deadline for filing applications - May 1, 1985

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT:

Your name (Mr., Mrs., Ms.) Jean + Lowell Hutchinson

Your address: P.O. Box 513 Union 97833
Street, Route, or Box Town Zip

Location of Farm: 2 miles S.W. Union-Dobbs Lane Union
Address County

To qualify as a Century Farm, a farm must have not less than 10 acres with a gross income from farm use of not less than \$500 per year for three out of the five years immediately preceding application for Century Farm Honors. Does your farm meet this qualification? yes

Name of family member who was founder or original owner of farm James Hutchinson

Year founder settled on farm 1865 Where did he come from? Illinois

Who farms the land today? Lowell Hutchinson

Relationship to original owner? Grandson

Are any of the original buildings still in use? If so which ones? no

If you know crops or livestock raised on farm one hundred years ago, please list:

Cattle + horses

What do you raise on farm today? Cattle, hay + wheat

How many generations live on the farm today (Names)? 3 generations

Duane Tyler family Diane Phifer family

How many times has the original farm been divided? Several

Do you declare that the statements made above are accurate and correct to the best of your knowledge? yes

Please return form to:

Jean + Lowell Hutchinson
Signature of Owner

Elizabeth W. Buchler, Field Historian
Oregon Historical Society
1230 S.W. Park Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97205

CFR0884

Adk
5/6/85

CERTIFICATION OF OWNERSHIP OF CENTURY FARM

I hereby certify that the farm for which Lowell Hutchinson, (by son)
Hutchinson

G. O. Box 513, Union, Oregon 97883
(owner's Name and Address)

is applying for Century Farm Honors has been in his family
continuously for one hundred or more years.

R. NELLIE BOGUE, COUNTY CLERK

By Deputy Deputy

(County Recorder/Clerk)

4/29/85
Date

Search for 'greener' pastures led pioneers back to Union Co.

Second of three parts
on local Century Farms

By Mike Van Meter
Observer Staff Writer

UNION — When Lowell Hutchinson's ancestors first came to the Grande Ronde Valley, they continued west in search of greener pastures.

"There wasn't anyone living here when they first went through," said Hutchinson. "They just kept going."

A few years later, however, they moved back from Vancouver, Wash., to "what looked like good cattle country."

From the original homestead, the Hutchinson spread was so large at one point that cattle could be driven back and forth between Union and North Powder without crossing anybody else's land. Now, the ranch covers a "mere" 3,500-3,800 acres.

Lowell and Jean Hutchinson's ranch — now operated by son-in-law Duane Tyler and his

wife Barbara with Lowell driving a tractor once in a while — is one of three newly designated Century Farms in Union County.

The naming of the farms brings to 14 the number of Century Farms in the valley. A total of 85 were designated statewide this year.

The Oregon Historical Society accepts applications for the honor once every five years.

Although the Hutchinson place is a Century Farm plus 20 years, it took the encouragement of one of the daughters, Diane Phifer, to file the application. The other three daughters, Barbara Tyler, Judy Perkins and Patsy Hand, also urged their parents to apply for the designation.

Though obviously proud of the honor, Hutchinson said he didn't push real hard.

"I never was too hot on the idea," said Lowell. "It's been here more than 100 years whether we have the certificate or not."

The place was first homesteaded in 1865, in a time when — as Lowell recalls in a story his grandmother, Mary Powers, told him — "she kept a rifle next to the rocking chair while she was rocking the babies" as protection from the Indians.

The Hutchinson's ancestors moved out west to flee both armies involved in the Civil War.

"(Grandfather) would sit on the fence and cuss both sides as they'd take their crops," said Lowell. "He finally said he was 'going where there isn't any war.'"

Thus began the circuitous journey to the Grande Ronde Valley.

When first homesteaded, the ranch was built on marshy ground and the grass was so high it "reached halfway up a horse's side."

Even in Lowell's time, much work was devoted to draining and filling ground, "and there's still a lot to do, but the next generation will do that."

Little remains of the original cabin, which was located in the foothills above the valley. The only traces are some buried timbers and a few fruit trees. Nobody knows the exact location of the home — only that it existed.

Their current home — located less than 50 yards from the house in which Lowell was born in 1912, is in the path of Union's legendary wind.

Lowell built the new house in 1932, three years before marrying Jean.

"That first winter I thought the house was going to blow away," said Lowell.

Within three years after they were married, he found a way to combat the wind.

"I cut a 20-foot willow limb for a radio antenna," said Lowell.

"The next year, it started growing. When I found out that they'd grow here ... well, then I got carried away, and every one of them grew."

Hutchinson's use of willows apparently was the first man-made windbreak in the valley. Since then, a number of farmers have planted windbreaks. This year, 4.5 additional miles of windbreaks have been planted in the valley.

Although he was the one who planted the antenna tree, Lowell didn't realize the value of the willow in keeping his house cool until recently, when the huge tree had to be removed to save the house from being uprooted.

"It really made a difference in how hot the house gets."

If not for the closed-door foreign policy of the U.S. government during the 1930s, the place might not be in Hutchinson's hands today.

"I got out of high school in 1930, and I was not going to be a farmer," said Hutchinson. "I tried to join the Army and the Navy, but they didn't want anybody."

"My grandma asked me to farm 160 acres for her until she could hire someone to do it."

Fifty-five years later, Hutchinson remains on the land.

La Grande OR
Observer
Aug 7 1965