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ABOUT THE FARM - - -

By John J. Inskeep, County Agent

Origin of Various Hay Crops Told; Veteran Granger Recalls History

When the name of some of the better known grain and forage crop varieties grown in Clackamas County, and what is the origin of these plants? A requested letter from D. D. Hill, head of the farm crops department, Oregon State College, throws some interesting light on these interesting questions. Those of Scandinavian origin among us will be proud to learn that two of our most important grain crops came from Sweden. When we think of the many fine people who came to us from Sweden and these two excellent grain crops—but we are off the subject. Here is Don Hill's letter.

Grey Winter Oats
'Grey winter oats have been grown along the Atlantic Seaboard for many years and are known there as winter turf. I have no record as to when they were introduced here, but it was many years ago. The Support oats is a selection of grey winter oats, which appears to be slightly more winter hardy and has somewhat stiffer straw. With respect to the stiffness of straw, however, that is purely relative as both varieties will lodge badly on rich soil. Actually the two varieties are indistinguishable, and our yield trials show little consistent difference in yield.

Victory Oats
'Victory oats. This variety was produced in Svalof, Sweden, at the Experiment Station there sometime during the early part of the twentieth century.

'Hannchen barley is also a product of the Svalof Station. It has been grown in Oregon for thirty to thirty-five years. Cascade barley is a selection I made from a lot of bulk hybrid barley obtained from the United States Department of Agriculture. The original selection was made in 1934 and the variety was reselected in 1936.

White Holland Wheat
'White Holland wheat was introduced from Holland, apparently as Queen Wilhelmina. As this was pretty much of a mouthful, people began referring to it as "that white Holland wheat." It finally has become known entirely by that name. White winter wheat, on the other hand, apparently was brought to Oregon with the early settlers and we have no record of its introduction here. Zimmerman wheat was selected by a farmer, Ed Zimmerman of Seio, I believe it occurred in a field of white winter wheat, but I am not sure on that point.

Grimm Alfalfa
'Grimm alfalfa was discovered on the farm of Wendelin Grimm in Minnesota. Apparently this variety had been grown in the same area since about 1860. This particular field served as the foundation of the Grimm variety for many years. I think Grimm was the first alfalfa seed certified in the United States.

'Kenland red clover developed as a result of a clover breeding program carried on cooperatively by the U. S. D. A. and the Experiment Stations in Kentucky and Tennessee. This is what is known as synthetic variety in which a number of lines are put together to establish the variety. Certain of the lines provide vigor, others provide disease resistance, and etc.

Crimson Clover
'Crimson clover is an old type of annual clover. More recently two varieties, Dixie and Autauga, have been developed in the South because they contain appreciable amounts of hard seed. This helps to maintain stand over a longer period.

'Common vetch was introduced into the United States from Europe and has been grown in the Willamette Valley for many years. The Willamette strain is a selection made here at the Experiment Station and distributed along about 1940. It is somewhat more winter hardy than the common strain, and I think most of the common vetch now in the Willamette Valley is of this variety.

Harly Vetch
'Harly vetch was introduced from Europe, but I have no exact record of the time. There have been some attempts to produce varieties, but there are no varietal distinctions. For example, the harly vetch we grow here today is largely what is known as the smooth type. A selection of this vetch was made in Oregon some twenty years ago and distributed as smooth vetch. The name, however, never did stick as it seems somewhat incongruous to speak of smooth harly vetch. No attempt has been made to keep this variety pure, but I think that most of the harly vetch grown here now is

conditions and even some hearsay.

First White Men

'It is possible the first white men to view this locality were Hudson Bay trappers though this is not sustained by any known record. The records of the General Land Office at Portland shows the names of these persons as, having been those who originally filed in the section where Needy is located and in each of the four sections adjoining it.

Burning Trees

'In the 1850's and even to the 80's the Needy area was largely one of almost unbroken forest. It was said that the only way to see daylight was to look straight up. If the settlers were to survive the forest must be destroyed. One method of destroying the many and huge trees was to burn them down. This was accomplished by boring two holes in the trunks near the ground, one hole angling down and the other angling up until they met. Hardwood coals were then pushed down the upper hole to where it met the lower hole and the latter was fanned until a small blaze was started. After one to three days depending upon how large the tree was, the amount of heartwood and pitch in it and the velocity of wind, the tree would usually fall. The boring and burning process was then repeated at intervals on the log until the parts were small and light enough to be pulled together and dry enough for further burning.

'The next step was to get rid of the stumps which was a more difficult job than disposing of the trees. There was no blasting powder, no stump pullers, no bulldozers. The grubbing had to be done with axe, shovel and grubhoe. It was slow, hard work and many of the early settlers became prematurely infirm and worn out struggling with these mighty stumps.

Chinese Laborers

'In the 80's there were a few settlers who scraped together enough money to hire small groups of Chinese to do heavy grubbing at from \$15 to \$20 per acre. These Chinese were laborers who were out of work when the Oregon & Californian

R. R., now the Southern Pacific, was halted at Roseburg. They were good dependable workers, well behaved and made many friends among the Caucasians. They were especially fond of children and bought more candy for them than was good for childish teeth.

'There has been conjecture in recent years as to why the early settlers chose such a heavily timbered area where the trees had nothing but a negative value. One explanation is that these people came from treeless sections of the United States and wanted all the timber they could use and did not know how much was too much. However, there was at least one man in the Needy group who did not choose a timbered claim. He chose one of the few prairies (and the largest in Clackamas County) which still bears his name—Elliott Prairie.

'In the early '80's a farmwife woman spent a whole summer looking for a location. She was hard to please and did not buy. As she was about to leave she said there was only one farm in Clackamas County that was worth having and that was the

one of Capt. Cochran on Elliott Prairie.

'A method of bringing into production land covered with second growth thickets was to slash it in late May or early June and then burn the debris in the fall. Sometimes quite a complete burn was accomplished but usually there were a great number of blackened poles that had to be gathered up. Some took them home for wood. And how the women did hate black poles! Stove wood from them had no equal in soiling wood box, hands, face, clothing, everything the sticks might touch.

(To be Continued)

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