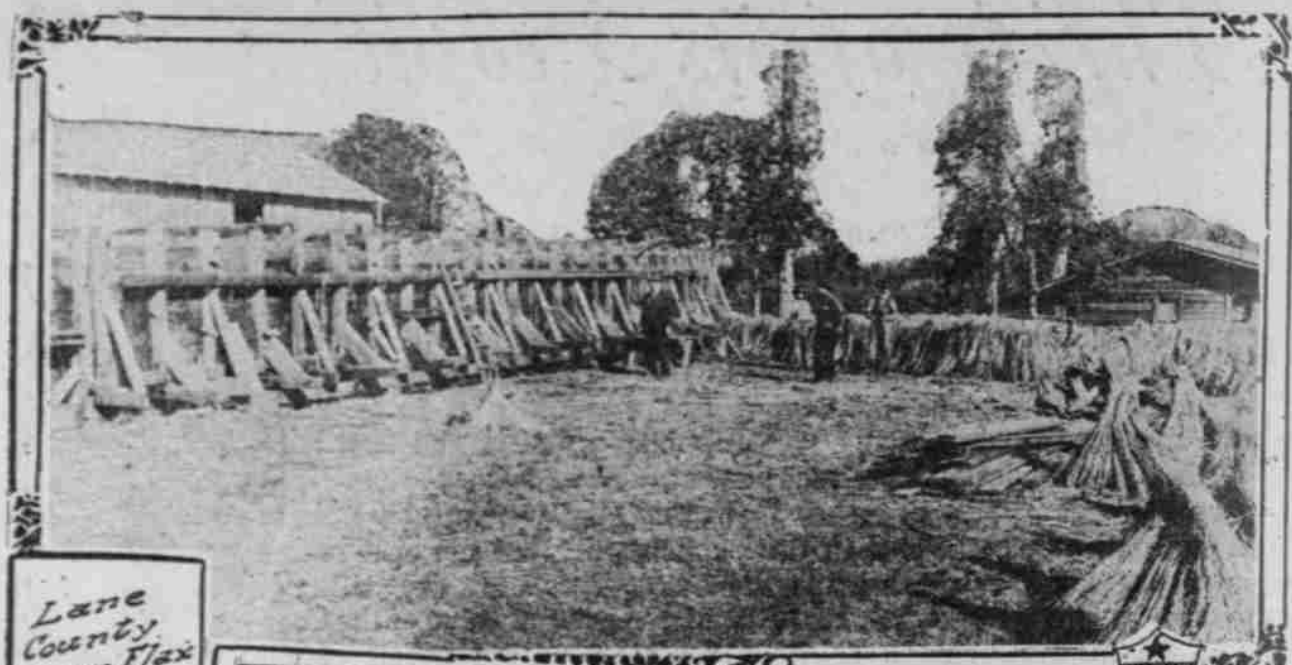


OREGON FLAX FIBER BRINGS BIG PRICE

Product of Lane County Is Marketed at \$840 a Ton—Experiments at State Prison Encouraging.



Lane County Grown Flax Drying in Field After Being Put Through Retting Process



EUGENE, Or., Dec. 31.—(Special.)—When Oregon-grown flax fiber was marketed early in 1917 for \$840 a ton on board cars in Eugene, a record price for flax fiber as a product of the soil of the United States was established. The flax was grown in connection with an experiment conducted by the Eugene Chamber of Commerce to test the possibilities of the flax industry in the Willamette Valley and the purchaser was the Belmont Packing & Rubber Company, of Philadelphia, Pa. The fiber was used in the manufacture of "water packing" for high-grade engines.

The price paid for the fiber attested the character of the product, but it did not emphasize the possibilities of the flax-growing industry in this state as strongly as letters received from experts at Belfast, Ireland, who pronounced samples of the Oregon product as fine as any they had ever handled, not excepting fiber from the Cotnam district, Belgium, known throughout the world for its high-grade product. The Irish firm were delighted with the prospect of getting flax fiber from a new field in view of conditions in Belgium which had been a blow to the flax industry. They made offers for the Lane County flax fiber, but these subsequently were withdrawn following the announcement of Germany's policy of unrestricted submarine warfare.

As a result of the experiment, plans were launched in Eugene to engage in the flax industry on a much more extensive scale. A total of \$25,000 was subscribed toward a company which was to have undertaken the project, but the war came and the promoters announced that they would postpone the venture a year and possibly until the peace of the world should be restored. The idea of continuing the development of the industry has not in any sense been abandoned.

The flax growing industry offers wonderful possibilities in the Willamette Valley and I believe the time will come when this will be a great flax center." George Quayle, secretary of the Eugene Chamber of Commerce, who had supervision of the flax experiment, said. "The experiment was a success so far as it has shown that flax of superior quality can be produced in Oregon; it has also shown that flax, if raised in commercial quantities, would be a profitable crop."

failure, the state and farmers in this vicinity in no way are discouraged over the situation, and expressions indicate that not only the state but individual farmers as well will have as much or more flax planted next spring than during the year just closed.

The failure of the flax crop was due to the same sort of weather conditions that hurt all cereal crops in this state as well as in others. A long dry season made the product of the flax fields good for little else but upholstery tow. But the flax crop was harder hit than other cereals because of the lateness of sowing time. This, through the nature of things, is required of flax, and as a result it failed even to get any of the benefit of the early spring rains, and struggled along through a hot, dry summer, endeavoring to hold its own, but failed.

Spenners Not Discouraged. Much encouragement has been met with, however, from Government experts who have been here this year and regardless of the appearance of the flax have asserted that this locality is as good, if not better, than other sections of the United States where flax is considered a good paying crop. Other flax experts also see in the failure this year only such a failure as sooner or later and at odd occasions flax will all kinds of growing crops, no matter how hardy they may be.

During 1917 the state had 300 acres sown to flax in this county, the Oregon Flax Fiber Company was guardian for 250 more and the Salem Commercial Club for about 300 more. If the crop had been normal this flax should have run from two and one-half to three tons an acre, or between 2000 and 2500 tons. With prices at an almost unbelievable point and no indications of a diminution in the market, the coming year is looked forward to as one which will recoup the locality for any losses that may have occurred. But the year just closed, despite the failure, has not been a dead loss, as Superintendent Crawford, of the prison flax plant, estimated that the crop, used for upholstery tow, will just about pay expenses. The prison plant is fitted with machinery to make the flax into this kind of tow and consequently every effort will be exerted to bring in this kind of return available on the crop.

It is estimated that the 1918 crop, which was disposed of during 1917, will bring in a gross return of about \$75,000, this not counting labor. The acreage during 1918 included about 600 acres, handled by the state, and that was practically all of the flax which was put in that season.

ing, being too weak, but Superintendent Crawford, of the prison plant, held out 1000 pounds of seed from the 1918 yield, which will plant about 500 acres, and plenty of seed, although probably at a high price, will be available for the crop which is to be sowed this coming year.

Under a policy that has been adopted by the state the flax of one year is not disposed of until the next, so that returns on the crop of 1918 will come in during 1919, if the present plan is followed.

The fact that linen mills have been located in Portland to handle practically all kinds of flax products also will add another impetus to the flax industry of this state.

The Oregon Flax Fiber Company, located at Turner, no doubt with confidence to aid in developing the industry, according to reports received here. That concern was sponsor for about 250 acres of flax during 1917 and as near as can be learned will handle as much next year, or possibly more.

The consensus of opinion among flax experts is that this section of the country is well adapted to flax culture. Adverse conditions and the natural difficulties met with in experimentation with a new industry have delayed the results which optimists looked forward to when flax was first mentioned here, but those familiar with flax conditions declare that the people of this valley yet will live to call blessed the pioneers in flax adventure who for years toiled and hoped that the Willamette Valley might become one of the greatest flax-producing centers in this country or in the world.

YAMHILL'S YIELD OF FOOD PRODUCTS BIG
Grain, Dairy Output and Canned Goods Make Great Gain—Patriotism Is Shown.

McMINNVILLE, Or., Dec. 31.—(Special.)—Yamhill County's 133,128 acres of tillable land as listed by the County Assessor, under the management of a patriotic yeomanry, have contributed during the past year their proper share in support of America and her allies, and now, under the caress of the winter rains, the pasture lands and fields of fall-sown grain are gathering energy for a still nobler gift for the coming season.

The county produced in 1917 a wheat crop estimated at 425,000 bushels, under the disadvantage of both acreage and yield being below normal, large areas having been utilized for pasture and forage crops to the direct advantage of the dairy industry, which is becoming an important factor in the county's staple products. For the past 12 months the dairy products manufactured and sold from this county have totaled no less than \$2,500,000. A gratifying feature is that

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canned goods are keeping a close second with dairying in helping to sustain the world in its food crisis. The value of the canning industry of the county will total more than \$2,000,000. Yamhill County prunegrowers packed 2500 tons of dried prunes, worth \$160 a ton.

Beans, onions, potatoes, apples, eggs and poultry are common carload products of the county, with such a diversity of shippers that tabulation is difficult.

Farmers of the county have 14,549 cattle, 8859 sheep, 6912 goats and 5235 swine, worth at the Assessor's figures \$267,425, the increase being available for food.

Yamhill County has been contributing to the world's food supply her people have not been unmindful of their first patriotic duty. More than 300 young men from Yamhill County homes are wearing the uniform of Uncle Sam in the various branches of the service. Company A, of the First Oregon Infantry, was recruited in Yamhill County. The regulars received a great many enlistments from here, and many more of the Yamhill County boys have obtained berths in the Navy.

Sentiment back of the boys behind the guns brought out \$144,000 for the first liberty loan and \$507,300 for the second liberty loan.

Yamhill County residents gave \$10,543 to the Red Cross fund, and were liberal contributors toward the soldiers' library and the Y. M. C. A. funds.

Ninety-six per cent of the housewives in Yamhill County signed the Hoover food conservation pledge cards. The residents of McMinnville and neighboring towns having boys in Company A, now in the 162d U. S. Infantry, were generous contributors, and when the company left Oregon it had \$1500 in the soldiers' mess fund.

McMinnville Lodge of Elks has 25 members in the military service in various units. The lodge recently gave a "high jinks," which yielded \$520. This was used to provide a special Christmas box for each of the 25 members.

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