

# Soil Repair Lessons in Willamette Valley

### Beginning of Livestock Breeding in Oregon, Methods of Pioneer Harvesting, Development of Horticulture, Effects of Toil on Character



BY LESLIE M. SCOTT. Chapter VI.

**S**HEEP breeding began in Old Oregon with the early pioneers, both British and American. In 1810 the value of sheep in the three states, as summarized in the Federal census, was: Oregon, \$12,212,942; Idaho, \$15,587,192; Washington, \$1,921,170. In Oregon sheep were third after horses and cattle as the chief livestock assets. In Idaho sheep were second after horses.

The early sheep in Oregon were merinos. They first appear to have been imported by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1833, by sea. In 1842 Joseph Gale (American) drove a flock of sheep overland to Oregon from California. These were Spanish merino. The first sheep driven across the plains—in 1844—were those of Joshua Shaw and son, Alva C. R. Shaw, of Polk County. Pure-bred merinos first came in 1851, brought from Ohio by Hiram Smith. In 1852 R. R. Thompson brought to Oregon across the plains a large flock, assisted by David P. Thompson, both of whom later were famous in the Pacific Northwest. Other early breeders of pure-bred sheep were J. L. Parrish, T. L. Davidson and Ralph Geer. Early in 1850 R. J. Jones and S. B. Rockwell imported pure-bred American and French merinos from Addison County, Vermont. I am indebted to Governor Withycombe for the following copy of a bill of sale for some of these sheep: "March 31, 1850.—We have this day sold to Joseph Holman and J. L. Parrish, one French merino buck, \$500; four breeding ewes, at \$25, \$100; two young ewes (not in lamb), \$100; total, \$1700. Received payment in cash and notes. (Signed) R. J. Jones, S. B. Rockwell." John S. Herrin, of Jackson County, a pioneer of 1852, from Kentucky, has been breeding sheep many years with the ambition to produce a 50-pound fleece.

It may be added that first-class livestock was present in sheep considerably earlier than in cattle or hogs, or horses, also that Oregon has long been a leading wool state and that its combing wools have been excelled by none in the world.

**VII.** In the foregoing chapter the advent of pure-bred cattle in 1870-71 has been noted. About the same time W. S. Ladd and S. C. Reed imported from England prize-winning Berkshires and Essex swine. Two years before Thomas Cross, of Salem, had also imported some high-bred Berkshires. Mr. Cross was the first pork packer on a commercial scale. It may be noted that the Berkshire family was common in Oregon for 10 or 15 years before these additions. As early as 1856 this kind of swine was here. The earliest hogs of the settlers were brought by Hudson's Bay Company, and old pioneers have many recollections of the troublesome beasts. No fences would hold the hardy animals; they wandered wherever their fancies took them and started many neighborhood enmities; out of this family of porkers developed the celebrated "razor back"—a specimen that frequently went wild in the forests and initiated its bear ancestors.

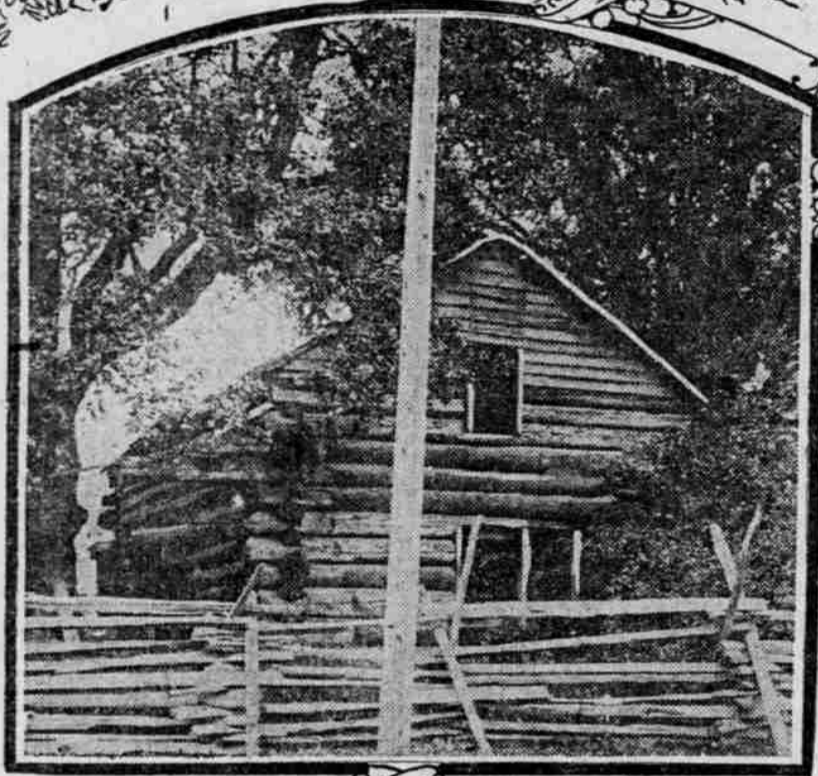
These "razor backs" were too busy to let fat grow on their bones. They were always on the move and were rooters of the first order of excellence, for which function they were equipped with an uncommonly long snout.

A breed known as the "Chinas," mostly white, very prolific, medium size, was known at Puget Sound, reputed to have been imported in the early '40s from England. I am informed by George H. Himes that David J. Chambers had "Chinas" at Puget Sound when the Himes family arrived there in 1852.

In recent years the beginnings of large pork production have started in the Willamette Valley. While nearly every farmer has had his swine from earliest pioneer times, he has grown them usually in a small way. Not until the last few years has he begun to enlarge this business, as the farmer long ago did in the corn regions of the Middle West.

**VIII.** The most valuable group of farm animals always has been that of horses. From earliest time these faithful allies of agricultural life have thrived in the Willamette Valley and elsewhere in Oregon. The pioneer horses were medium-sized, sturdy and fleet—a combination animal for all-round service. Later came Clydesdale and Percheron and Belgian infusions.

The American horse, like the American citizen, is a mixture of old-world families, and as we are fond of saying that the human family in America has been improved by the intermingling we may say this just as truthfully of the horse family. The English and the Dutch and the French colonists in America brought over their favorite breeds of horses; so did the Spaniards somewhat earlier, from whose importations spread the equines that were in possession of the Indians when the whites began exploring the continent. The "cayuse" ponies of the Upper Columbia River probably did not precede Lewis and Clark more than 150 years. Although the pioneers used oxen for



Log Cabin of Harvey Clark at Forest Grove, Built in 1841. Note the Rail Fence, the Universal and Standard Fence of Pioneer Days.

crossing the plains in preference to horses for "prairie schooners," horses were commonly employed, and every immigrant planned either to bring horses with him or to obtain them at his destination in Oregon. The Middle West horses, evolved from 200 years of rough pioneer life, were a strong and vigorous breed, and were much improved through successive breeding in the Pacific Northwest. A good stallion came across the plains in 1843 with John G. Baker, a native of Kentucky. This animal, while not a thoroughbred, was a high-class one. Another Kentucky stallion came across in 1841 with S. D. Ruddell from Missouri, and was taken to Thurston County, Washington, the next year. It may be in point to say that just as Kentucky sent to Oregon through Illinois and Missouri a large part of its pioneer settlers, so also it sent horses, and these horses, like the citizens, were most valuable in the progress of the country. W. C. Myer, of Jackson County, introduced the first blooded Percheron horses and Shetlands, in the early '70s.

**IX.** It may be appropriate here to note the methods of pioneer harvesting in Oregon, inasmuch as the progress of farm machinery always keeps pace with, or precedes, the growth of an agricultural community. As may be supposed, the old-time hand sickle and flails were in use in the earliest time. The first cradles for mowing were brought by Jason Lee in 1840, on the ship Lausanne, from New York. There were three types of cradles in pioneer times: the "turkey-wing," with handle almost straight; the "muley," with handle somewhat crooked; the "grapevine," with handle much bent. The latter type is still in use. Late in the '50s the first mowing machines appeared, and in the early '60s they had come into general use. The threshing machine arrived nearly a decade earlier. Thomas Otchin had one near Hillsboro in 1850. Cliff blowers were employed early. Dr. Whitman had one in operation at Wallatpu, near Walla Walla, in 1846. The first chaff pile at Puget Sound was made by Isaac Wood & Sons, and used four and one-half miles east of Olympia in 1855. George Bush, the leader in farming at Puget Sound, introduced the first mower and reaper in 1856.

**WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY**  
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Mr. Gould, "Why, I'll attend to that here's a check."  
The place has become a Mecca of pilgrims for multitudes of persons from all over the United States. Indeed, if it were possible, it might be said that foreigners hold Washington in even higher reverence than we do, and distinguished visitors from foreign parts invariably find their way to Mount Vernon.  
**Place Shows How Owner Lived.**  
All of this enthusiasm is the direct result of the efforts of the association. For the interest attaching to Mount Vernon depends mainly upon the fact that its physical aspect and environment are substantially the same as in George Washington's time. It reproduces the intimate circumstances of Washington's life and doings. Persons who go to Mount Vernon feel that they have done the next best thing to meeting Washington face to face.  
Entering the mansion, they are admitted to its domestic intimacies. They even behold the room in which Washington died, and its old-fashioned bed, with four tall and slender posts, hung with the original white dimity curtains, and covered with the same spread that was used for his couch. The fur-

Nathan Eaton used the second mower beginning in 1857. The first thrasher and separator was introduced north of the Columbia at Cowlitz Farms in 1856 by T. W. Glasgow, Daniel J. Hubbard and John B. Forbes. This machine was brought to Thurston County in June or July, 1857. George H. Himes, now curator of the Oregonian Historical Society, worked on the machine in August, 1857, on the farm of David J. Chambers, four miles east of Olympia. "The output of this machine," writes Mr. Himes in a recent note, "was 500 bushels of wheat, or 700 or 800 bushels of oats a day, against 50 and 75 bushels when tramped out by horses and winnowed by the primitive method."

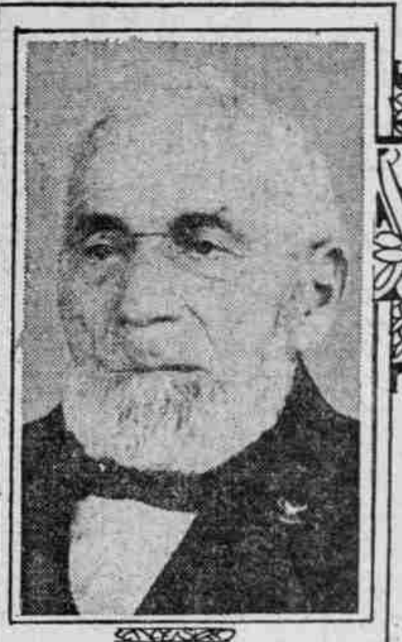
**X.** Apple and pear production in "train-load lots" is a development of the last 15 or 20 years. The pioneers grew apples for home and local consumption; in the mining days of California they shipped considerable quantities thither. But the "fancy" fruit packed in labeled boxes, filling whole boxcars and trainloads, is a late idea or realization.

The pioneers found the Willamette Valley a paradise for apples. A wild crabapple is native of Western Oregon and Washington, and this wild fruit and the finest of cultivated grow in equal luxuriance. The late Harvey W. Scott, 40 years editor of the Oregonian, used to tell of beautiful large apples, grafted on the native stock, growing to fine fruit beside the little crab apple on the same tree. Throughout the three Northwest states apples are probably more widespread than any other fruit. From early pioneer times Oregon was named the "Land of Big Red Apples." They had no enemies, neither worm nor aphid nor scale, and needed little tillage. The origin of the fruit industry is commonly ascribed as beginning with the "Traveling Nursery," which Henderson Luelling hauled from Missouri to Milwaukie, in 1847. In that same year J. C. Geer, Sr., carried to the Willamette Valley a bushel of apple seeds. Ralph C. Geer, years afterward commended the Luelling nursery as having brought "more wealth to Oregon than any ship that ever entered the Columbia River." (History of Willamette Valley, page 362.)

**JEFFERSON'S GREAT DREAM REALIZED**  
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many improvements and steady growth to the road.  
Then Julie M. Hannaford, present president of the Northern Pacific, took hold. He is a self-made man, and his active work upward in the history of the Northern Pacific is a part of its eventful history. Hannaford's disposition was such that he stopped at nothing that was honest to push his company to the front, at the same time carrying himself upward in his career as a railroad man.  
Mr. Hannaford was born November 19, 1850, at Claremont, N. H. He hurried through an ordinary school education, and in 1866 entered the railway business with the Vermont Central road at St. Albans. In 1873 he entered the employ of the Northern Pacific, and from that day to this he has been with it in the various capacities of chief clerk in different departments, up the line including assistant freight, passenger or general agent at various times until in 1899 he was general traffic manager of the system. In 1890 he was general traffic manager of the Wisconsin Central lines during their lease to the Northern Pacific. In 1899 he was third vice-president and in 1902 second vice-president of the Northern



Geo. B. Roberts, Supt. of Cowlitz Farms, Hudson Bay Company, Pioneer of 1850.



F. X. Matthieu, One of First American Farmers in Old Oregon.



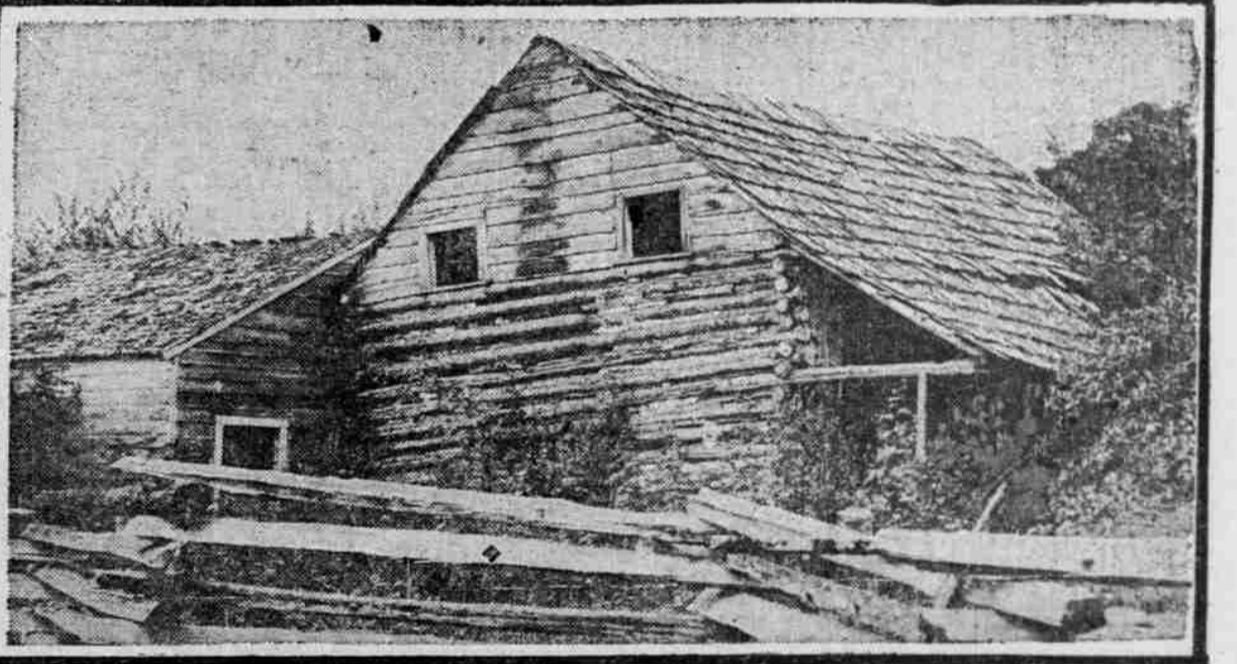
Michael Simmons, Who Led First American Farmers to Puget Sound in 1845.



Rev. Joson Lee, Who Began Farming Near Salem in 1835.



First Brick House in Oregon, Built in 1841, Near Wheatland, by George Gay, Pioneer 1835



Residence of John R. Jackson, First American Settler North of Columbia River.

agriculture in Eastern Washington than in Oregon, the explanation lies in certain natural and man-made differences. Between Eastern Washington and Eastern Oregon, the advantage of low elevation is on the side of the former. Besides, Eastern Washington is better watered; the Columbia River traverses the whole breadth of the

country and with its tributaries has cut down the general level below that of Eastern Oregon. Again, the great railroad systems, terminating at Puget Sound, have covered Eastern Washington with a network of lines and branches, while in Eastern Oregon there has been little or no railroad transportation to compare with it. These advantages have stimulated activity as nowhere in Oregon.

Wheat raising did not bring about the old lethargy of the Willamette Valley; was only a reacting symptom of it. The real reason for wheat-raising there was the fitness of soil and summer dryness to such crop; then unreadiness of the old population to change methods of tillage; next the lack of "new blood" immigration. The early farming of the pioneers seems to have produced a "race of descendants too easy-going. Soil was so fertile and climate so mild that the children of pioneers fell into lazy habits of farming.

Now the new generation and a fresh race of newcomers are pulling away from the old methods. They are restoring the soil and establishing the annual repair method; are cutting down the size of farms, and, incidentally, thereby trying to reduce the labor problem, have discarded the old idea that summer dryness necessitates grain-growing; are learning how to conserve for the very summer the heavy rainfall of the three other seasons—this without artificial irrigation.

The pioneers were an active race, both in mind and in body. They were sharply aware of the new inventions as each came along and managed to bring them here, chiefly by sea, despite the general poverty of the country in the '50s. It would not be fair to judge the first generation of pioneers from the example of their slipshod descendants, who have permitted the old farms in Willamette Valley to go unkempt and farm machinery to rust to waste in the fields. The first pioneers were not mossbacks; far from it. They were a trying race of men and women; their 2500-mile trek across the plains shows them to have been hardy and untiring; absence of crime among them shows their sense of individual responsibility highly developed; also their regard for the golden rule. Marital infidelity was rare and divorce was unknown. They toiled early and late, and thought hardship the natural and inevitable portion. These habits were produced through generations of hard work and individual thrift in the Middle West and in the Atlantic coast colonies.

Their descendants in the Willamette Valley somehow did not inherit these characteristics, perhaps because life here was "easy." It is well known that the sturdiest races are those which have had to struggle hard against natural severities, such as those of Northern Europe. It seems not good for men and women to live without effort. Perhaps there was too much ease for the successors of the pioneers in the Willamette Valley. If so, this condition did not last long. The soil after while "petered out" and its possessors had to go to work with a vim. In recent years they have been working to good purpose and the effects are good, both on the land and on the individual character.

**WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY**  
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niture of the room is the same—even to a liquor case in the corner holding three bottles of two quarts each. This, however, must have been for emergency use, inasmuch as Washington was certainly not addicted to stimulants. Washington's bedroom, by the way, is said to be haunted. It is not that any recognizable apparition has ever been seen there, but the few persons who have occupied the chamber for sleeping purposes have been almost unanimous in asserting that they were beset by a consciousness of the nearness of some strange and brooding specter—presumed, of course, to be that of the former proprietor of the mansion.  
**Carpet Causes Scandal.**  
Although Mount Vernon in Washington's day was equipped with all the latest luxuries then known, it knew no carpets or rugs. On one occasion Washington did import a carpet which was intended for his library, but the cost of it was so great that his political opponents advertised the matter as a scandal. No President of the United States has ever been more abused and vilified than Washington, and he, in order to put a stop to the talk in this instance, refused to receive the carpet or to pay duty on it. It was bought in

at auction by a Philadelphia woman, and a descendant of hers gave it not long ago to the Mount Vernon Association, so that it finds itself by a curious chain of circumstances in the place for which it was originally intended.  
When the ladies of the association are "camping out" for their annual week at Mount Vernon they take their meals in the old library and the cooking is done for them by an aged woman named Sarah, who is a great-grandchild of one of Washington's slaves. She has a farm of her own, but it delights her to come and minister unto those who have made themselves caretakers in these days of the ancient mansion. Another old colored woman, of similar ancestry, occupies the spinning wheel and gives lessons in spinning with the wheel and in weaving after the old-fashioned method.  
The only fear for the future of Mount Vernon lies in the possibility of fire. Against this danger every imaginable precaution is taken. No lights, save candles, are allowed on the premises. In a vault near the house are kept four chemical engines, and there are four tanks of bicarbonate of soda and water, over each of which is suspended a receptacle containing a gallon of sulphuric acid. In case of emergency the sulphuric acid would be upset into the soda solution, generating quantities of carbonic acid gas, in the presence of which fire cannot live. In addition there are scattered through the mansion a number of portable fire extinguishers.

Although the pioneers used oxen for