

HOW CORN WAS BOOSTED IN MARION COUNTY

THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY HAS NOW BECOME A CORN COUNTRY

(By Luther J. Chapin)

Educational methods have changed greatly in the past decade. The old method of book instruction has given way to the more practical laboratory method. Theory has been superseded by practice.

This is more especially true in the field of agricultural education. Demonstration farms and the more recent farm demonstrations planned and conducted by county agriculturists have greatly extended the scope and usefulness of the agricultural colleges.

When the writer entered on the duties of county agriculturist for Marion county, Oregon, September 7, 1912, he was the first county agriculturist west of the Rocky mountains.

The work was new in the United States at that time and the only instructions given were: "Get acquainted with your county. Study local conditions. Find your own problems."

The problem that first presented itself was one upon which many other problems hinged. It was the need of better cropping schemes.

Grain raising, principally wheat and oats, was the chief enterprise in one part of the county, the land being summer-fallow every third year.

Another large section was devoted to dairying, and clover was an established crop in the rotation.

Still another fairly well defined area was devoted almost exclusively to fruit growing—prunes, peaches, loganberries and strawberries being the principal fruits grown. The almost universal practice among those fruit growers was clean tillage from the time the plantation was set out.

Potatoes appeared to be about the only cultivated crop and it was impractical to plant one-third or one-fourth of the farm to potatoes.

There was an evident need of a crop—a cultivated crop that could be grown in larger acreages to take the place of the wasteful summer-fallow, to fit into the rotation on the stock farms, and to grow among the fruit trees, especially in the young orchards while they were coming into bearing.

Corn, the great American crop, appeared to be the only crop that could fit into all of these schemes. It is true that the introduction of corn instead of summer-fallow would necessitate a radical change in the whole plan, on the exclusive grain farms, but such a change was necessary as the average field of wheat and oats was rapidly becoming less. It would mean the adoption of a more diversified farming scheme with livestock as a basis.

Nothing else could be more easily adopted by the dairy farmers and no other crop could fit so well into their rotations.

The principal money crop on many of these farms was clover seed and a vexing problem was how to control the noxious weeds such as buckhorn, plantain, sorrel and the so-called joint grasses which were making clover seed production more and more difficult.

Corn was also needed on these farms to balance the feeding rations—to supply the carbohydrates to balance the highly nitrogenous clover and vetch hays.

A majority of the fruit plantations were on old land—land that had already been long used to grain raising

and summer-fallowing. To make the ruin more complete the depletion of the humus in these lands by the summer-fallowing practice had been hastened by burning all the straw and in some cases the stubble.

To continue this clean tillage after the harvest was set out, giving the burning rays of the summer sun and the drenching rains of winter free and uninterrupted sway, appeared to be the final chapter in the process of soil ruin.

Corn was needed in these orchards to shade the ground in summer and to pay the operating cost until they came into bearing, the stalks supplying in part, the much-needed humus.

"But corn can't be grown here," was universally shouted. "However desirous it might be, the nights are too cool. It can't be done."

Well, that would seem to settle the matter if it had not been for the fact that a number of farmers, a few in each class, were growing corn. It had been growing it successfully from ten to twenty years.

These facts had been gathered and the methods of these successful corn growers studied in the first careful survey of the county.

One thing was very evident, however. At the rate this information was traveling it would be many generations before it would be generally known that corn could be used as a staple crop to satisfy the above needs.

The problem was how to impress this fact on the minds of the people. Telling them accomplished nothing except to provoke ridicule. Even my warmest friends said: "You're all right, generally, but you're away off on that corn proposition for this valley. We haven't the climate here for corn. It takes hot nights to make corn grow."

Nothing could be more certain than that these farmers would have to be shown.

Profiting by the experiences of county agriculturists in the South where boys' clubs were used so effectively in promoting better agricultural methods, a boys' corn club was organized at St. Paul, a little railroad town on the Willamette river in the northern end of Marion county.

The best local grown seed available was secured for these boys, the first and most important step in successful corn growing in any country. This indeed was the secret of the success of the few farmers who had been able to grow corn so successfully. They had acclimated their corn and then retained their own seed.

This club met from time to time during the year with the county agriculturist to study and discuss methods of planting and cultivating and finally harvesting their crop.

That year, 1913, was an average year and the boys nearly all had some fair corn to harvest. Squirrels and gophers and crows made it interesting for the boys—a few being wholly beaten. These pests gave the boys an added interest and some good lessons were learned in how to combat such pests.

Although no corn show had ever been held west of the Rockies, it was decided to hold one that fall at St. Paul and "show" what had been done.

The results were truly amazing and people came from far and near to see what was advertised as a "Corn Show." Railroad officials from Portland, professors from the Agricultural College, and politicians from the state capital came to St. Paul to see what the boys had really done.

The first prize in each class was a two days' free trip to the Agricultural College. No boy was allowed to draw more than one first prize, so six boys won this trip. The fifty-mile ride on the train, the visit at the college, the night at the leading hotel, and the return trip was well worth all the summer's effort in the opinion of every boy who made the trip. And every boy went home determined to attend that college as soon as he was old enough.

Another corn show was held at St. Paul the next fall, but this time the men took a hand, many farmers having grown corn for the first time. The results were all that could be wished for. The quality of the corn was much better than the first year, due in part to the fact better seed was used, and in part to better methods of culture.

The show method had been so effective in the vicinity of St. Paul that a county show was held in Salem in November of that year, the extension department of the college assisting the county agriculturist in this work.

Few farmers were growing more than an acre or two of corn and most of this was cut and fed green in the late summer or early fall, so the first success in the opinion of many of the visitors. Some who had raised corn in Missouri or Kansas were eager to learn if we "called that corn." Others tried to be more encouraging and said it was "pretty good for Oregon."

Nevertheless, the show was a real success. It taught those who exhibited how to better select seed corn and many others decided to try a small patch the next year.

The agricultural lectures given during the show were well attended and a keen interest taken in methods of corn culture and seed selection.

Encouraged by a greatly increased acreage the next year, 1915, it was decided to hold a number of local shows and then bring them all together into one big county show.

Accordingly six shows were held in as many communities, the smallest one being as large as the first county show.

These were all brought together into the Second Annual Marion County Corn Show the first week in

December and few who saw it would admit that they ever said corn could not be grown in Oregon.

The entries consisted of 74 one-hundred-ear lots, 229 ten-ear lots, and 81 single-ear displays of field corn and 72 twelve-ear lots of popcorn and sweet corn.

Fortunately the prize winners at this show nearly all had fairly large amounts of seed corn for sale. Their supplies, however, were all exhausted long before the planting season ended the following spring.

The acreage of corn in Marion county had jumped from a possible 500 acres in 1912 to at least 15,000 acres in 1916.

In spite of a backward spring and a cool summer, the corn crop this year promised to be the best ever grown in Western Oregon, and it was, in fact, from a silage standpoint, but an unusually early frost prevented much of it from coming to full maturity.

Notwithstanding this very unusual combination of unfavorable conditions the Third Annual Marion County Corn Show, which closed December 16th, was a splendid success.

The lesson learned from this show was a most valuable one. From every part of the county came corn of better quality than last year.

The use of acclimated seed had made this possible.

Early Minnesota, Golden Glow, and Oregon Yellow Dent, from last year's prize winning lots, carried away the prizes this year in the ear classes. Oregon Yellow Dent took first prize in the silage class.

So much good has been accomplished by means of the shows in Marion county that a Willamette Valley Corn Show, including nine counties, has been proposed. It is planned that each county shall exhibit in an individual booth and a grand prize given for the best booth.

The advancement of the corn industry in this section has been more rapid during the past four years than that of any other agricultural enterprise. This rapid growth has been brought about in very large measure by the corn shows which have demonstrated that corn can be grown and afforded a means of distributing the best local grown seed.

The continued advancement of this enterprise is assured because of its adaptability to the general agricultural needs of the country. In the

college and faced life with not quite \$7 in his pocket.

How did he do it?

Frugal, Industrious, Energetic.

The old court records, in which his guardian makes reports to the executors of the modest Hoover estate, tell the tale: "Frugal, industrious, energetic," Mr. Hoover lost both his parents when he was a child. All that was left to him and his little brother and sister was a house and lot, worth about \$1,000. The property was sold, and the proceeds used to educate the three. Young Herbert went to Salem, Ore., to live with an uncle, Dr. H. J. Minthorne. His uncle boarded and clothed the boy without charge. In November, 1889, this uncle, who was also the boy's guardian, applied to the court back in Iowa for \$60 with which young Herbert might purchase a scholarship in a business college.

"I think," comments the guardian, "if he had this scholarship he would make use of it, and get full benefit from it."

When the boy was eighteen he was working in a real estate office, and supporting himself. He decided to attend Stanford University and make mechanical engineering a specialty.

In 1893 comes the following report from the boy's guardian in the court records: "Herbert has made very good progress in his studies in vacation, and was credited by the faculty with six months' university work. He made \$65 a month assisting with a geological survey of Arkansas."

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INDUSTRY, FRUGALITY, ENERGY WIN FAME FOR HERBERT HOOVER

Little Herbie Hoover's come to our house to stay, To make us scrape the dishes clean, an' keep the crumbs away, An' learn us to make war-bread, an' save all the grease, For the less we eat of butter, the sooner we'll have peace. An' all us other chil'ren, when our scanty meals is done, We gather up around the fire an' has the mostest fun A-listenin' to the proteins that Herbie tells about, An' the Calories that git you

Er
you
don't
watch
out!
An' little Herbie Hoover says, when the fire burns low, An' the vitamins are creepin' from the shadows, so! an' slow, You better eat the things the Food Folks says they's plenty of, An' cheat the garbage pail, an' give all butcher's meat the shove, An' gobble up the corn-pone an' veg'tables an' fish, An' save yer dippin' an' yer sweets, an' lick clean ever' dish, An' don't get fresh a-talkin' of what you won't do without, Or the Calories'll git you

Er
you
don't
watch
out!
—Sophie Kerr in Life.

HERBERT HOOVER, the man whose name is on nearly every home in the United States, lived in Salem during his young manhood and his uncle, Dr. J. Minthorne, a Salem man, was his guardian. Records filed by this guardian show how the boy made a fight for success. It is said that he started out in the world with \$6.97 in his pocket. Now Herbert Hoover is a millionaire. He contributes all of his time free to the United States, yet that is the smallest part. He controls the destinies of millions of American citizens from the standpoint of food.

But little "Herbie" Hoover had a boyhood—and it was a typical boyhood like so many of our self-made men have had. Says the New York Herald:

"The world sent him out in life and fame with just \$6.97 buried away in one of the pockets of a neat but rather threadbare suit. What he lacked in finances he made up in character, and in the handwriting of his dead mother, had an abundance of 'frugality, energy and industriousness.'"

In the Cedar county court house, in Tipton, Iowa, near West Branch, the little Quaker settlement where Mr. Hoover was born, these records are still on file. Mr. Hoover is a modest man. He talks little about himself and what an uphill road he had to climb in his youth. But these old records throw an illuminating light on the character of the man whose name today is a household word all over America. It seems somehow fitting that the man who has a big brotherly eye on several million kitchens in connection with Uncle Sam's determination to win the war should have been born

in the midst of one of the richest farming sections in the United States.

First Home Still Standing.

The one story house which was his first home is still standing in West Branch, Iowa. Looking round at the fertile rolling corn fields stretching on all sides of the town one wonders if Mr. Hoover did not think longingly of this land of plenty which was his birthplace when confronted with the task of feeding hunger stricken Belgium.

It's no wonder that Hoover, big man that he is, prefers to keep out of the limelight. He was born in a simple, unassuming atmosphere. His mother was a Quaker preacher. Young Herbert used to run barefoot along the dusty roads which straggled through the town. He did a few chores and went to school and played with his brother and sister. When his mother went to neighboring towns and country churches to preach he stayed with his cousins, one of whom, George C. Hoover, an attorney, still lives in West Branch. The town has changed a good deal since the man who was destined to play such a big part in the war rolled nables in front of the general store. There are cement sidewalks and electric light and modern homes. A few years ago, traveling in his private car, Mr. Hoover returned to West Branch and visited the little grave yard under the pine trees where the humble little headstones mark the resting place of his father and mother. It is part of the Quaker faith to carry simplicity even to the grave.

And this great man was the same boy who had watched his way through

WALTON TELLS EXPERIENCE WITH WALNUTS IN WILLAMETTE VALLEY

Ground Must Be Chosen With Caution and Frost Pockets Avoided; Franquette Considered Best; Oregon Product Superior to California Nuts

(By W. C. Cowgill)

"Ten acres of English walnuts is considered a good-sized holding in California, and that acreage of bearing trees of a good variety in Oregon would make any grower more profitable than he would be likely to realize from a larger acreage of fruit," said William S. Walton, cashier of the Ladd & Bush bank, when seen in his office yesterday.

"The growing of walnuts in Oregon was started many years ago by Colonel Henry E. Dosch of Portland, as an experiment on the part of the Oregon State Horticultural society, and since that time the growing of walnuts for profits has become a branch of horticulture of increasing importance.

Grows Nuts in Salem.

"As a matter of recreation I have given some time and attention to the growing of walnuts, experimenting with different varieties, methods of culture and other important features connected with this growing industry of the state. I have a little ground right here in this city where I have a few trees and give them some of my spare time.

"Climate, soil, drainage, both of the land in which the trees are planted and of the air above, are important to the successful growing of English walnut trees. The trees require a deep soil, not closely underlaid with rock or hard pan, so as to allow unobstructed extension of roots through the well drained soil.

"In my opinion much of the soil in the Willamette valley is not suited to the successful growing of English walnuts. It is too wet and too frosty. This is where drainage, below and above, plays the all important part. Land should be, by nature or artificially, well drained, and it should contain no frost pockets. These frost pockets are caused by the

ting of cold air in gullies or hollows which do not allow the air to be replaced by the higher air which is always warmer at the time of the year when the spring and early fall frosts, which are most injurious to walnuts, occur. Frost pockets will occur on high ground as well as on low, if the depressions do not permit air drainage. The soil and air must be well drained or the results will be disappointing.

Cities Protect Trees.

"In towns there are instances of single trees of English walnuts or other fruits which annually bear very large crops. This is due first to the fact that the trees are growing in soil that is well and deeply drained by the city sewerage system, and, secondly, to the hundreds of chimneys in the city which act as natural and effective smudge pots which keep off the frosts of early spring and fall. Prospective planters should not be misled by the results from these city trees and expect the same exceptional results from an entire orchard, or they will be disappointed.

"While I have experimented with several varieties of walnuts, the Franquette is the best, I think. The nuts are large and smooth and of fine quality. The extra large, rough nuts are not sought for in the market. It takes about eight years to bring walnut trees into bearing, although they will produce crops of good quality in five years. Grafted trees, or trees raised from what are known as 'first generation' nuts, are the best.

"In my opinion the quality of the Oregon walnuts is far superior to the quality of those from California. Our more moderate summers do not ripen the nuts or foliage, which results in a nut of higher quality, with a fine, light-colored meat of delicate flavor."

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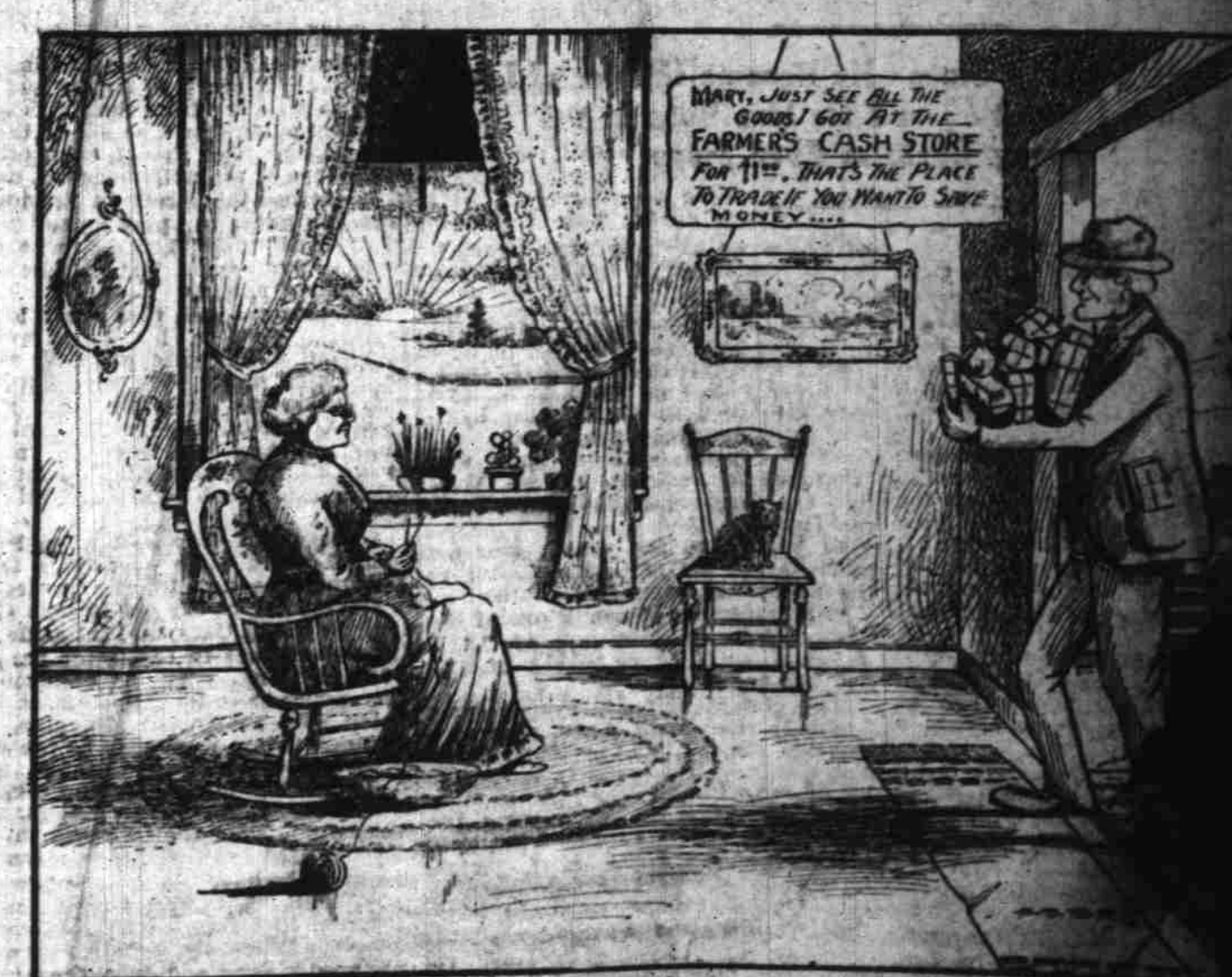
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