

MILLION TREES AND PLANTS AT MILLER NURSERY AT MILTON, ORE.

From Small Beginning in 1878 Business Has Grown Until it is Now One of Largest Nurseries in Northwest.

After starting in business with 10 acres of land, a slight knowledge of the nursery business, and an ideal of his own about the possibilities that could be realized in the work, A. Miller, a 21-year-old young pioneer of Umatilla county, today has the satisfaction that comes from making a dream come true.

The monument of his labors is the Milton Nursery Co. It is the biggest concern of its kind in Eastern Oregon and one of the biggest nursery establishments in the Northwest. From the original 10 acres, the land holdings in the company, all in one compact block just east of Milton-Freewater, has been added to until today there are 260 acres devoted to the business of growing trees, plants and shrubs and a few flowers.

Of course, this big concern does not owe all of its present success to Mr. Miller alone. Mrs. Miller has been a partner in the business throughout all these years, and at the age of 73, she is still hale and hearty and taking pleasure in the success that has crowned the venture that was started almost a half century ago. Then there are the Miller "Boys," three of them who devote their time and energies to the business, and C. D. Hobbs, the company's secretary, is a relative by marriage.

Started on Small Scale.
It was back in 1878 that Mr. Miller started the present business. He had 10 acres of land, some knowledge of the rudiments of grafting as practiced in assisting Mother Nature to improve fruit trees, and a firm conviction that there was a future to the nursery business in the Northwest to which he had come from his former home in Iowa.

For many years, the production work was carried on in the river bottom, small plots of land being added to the original 10-acre plot as the infant industry waxed successful and made it necessary to expand the area on which trees had to be grown. Then in 1896 S. A. Miller, the oldest of the three boys, secured an interest in the business, and a little later G. W. and C. B. Miller were added to the firm. Mr. Hobbs secured an interest following this, and in 1908, production had reached such a scale that it was found advisable to incorporate for \$50,000.

Have Big Prune Orchard.
Of the 260 acres of the holdings of the company, 80 acres is devoted to prunes, and this orchard will come in to bearing next year. The orchard is well cultivated and is absolutely free of weeds, and the trees look thrifty. This year prunes have been a good crop, and orchardists have realized nice sums from their trees. Eastern Oregon has an advantage in this prune business that is shared by only two other prune-growing districts in the

country. This advantage is found in the fact that the prunes grown in the Milton-Freewater section can be shipped all over the world in their natural state. When other sections whose prunes must be dried for shipment are having a hard time in disposing of their crops, Milton-Freewater orchardists can sit back at ease and figure out the year's profits. Shipments are sometimes made to Liverpool, Copenhagen, France and other foreign countries, and the undried fruit enjoys a popularity that makes a market relatively sure every year.

Many kinds of shrubs are grown on the grounds, too. Plants, vines and roses are a part of the production activity of the company, and the variety carried is in keeping with the progressive spirit of the company. Included in this branch of the business are small fruits and berries of different kinds and varieties.

Land All Irrigated.
All of the land owned by the company is under irrigation. During the early years when Mr. Miller was operating by himself, it was not known whether the so-called hill or wheat land could be used to advantage in the nursery game. An experiment was made on a smaller plot, water was put on the soil, and it proved to be an ideal place for the propagation of quality young trees and shrubs.

There is some expense to irrigation as it is practiced by the company, but everything is in tip-top condition for getting water just where it ought to be just when the grower wants it there. There is one mile of concrete pipe to convey the water and the wooden flumes have a total length of several miles.

The nursery is one of the biggest, if not the biggest, pay roll concerns in the Milton-Freewater section. From 30 to 25 men on an average are employed all year, and in 1929, the labor expenses were \$15,000. This does not take into consideration the office help and the salaries paid the executive officers, so the total of money paid out every year which is distributed over the community by the employed force helps materially.

1,000,000 Trees and Plants.
This season there has been about 1,000,000 trees and plants on the place. Of this number, about 350,000 are budded trees and then there are 150,000 apple grafts. Other plants and shrubs are grown in sufficient numbers to bring the total to the million mark.

During blooming season, a sight of the peony plots is one that is well worth a long trip to see. Three acres are devoted to peonies, and cut flowers and bulbs are sold. The company has a wide selection of varieties.

It requires three years before a budded apple tree is ready to be planted in an orchard, according to

Mr. Hobbs. An apple seed is planted in the spring and it grows during the summer. During the second year, this seedling is transplanted and later the variety of apple which the tree is desired to produce is budded on the seedling. Later the seedling trunk is severed, and the tree that is ready to be set out in its permanent home at three years old is a "combination" tree; it has the root system of the seedling, and the top is of the variety of the bud.

The company produces quite a lot of the seedlings used in the budding and grafting, but some are shipped in from foreign countries.

Have Wide Market.

During the long period of its career the company has built up a wide market. The territory in which the bulk of the business is done consists of the states of Oregon, Washington, California, Idaho, Montana and British Columbia. Many orders are filled for other states in the union, and many times customers from foreign countries send to Milton for their nursery stock.

There are at least 50 orchards in Greece, too, that owe their origin to stock that originally came from the Milton nursery. Several years ago, a Greek worked on the farm, and when he decided to go home he carried with him quite a variety of fruit. It was illegal to import fruit trees, so he threw his stock overboard on coming to land and then rescued them later from the water. Trained in the business, he started a small nursery of his own, and he has furnished the trees for about 30 orchards in his native country.

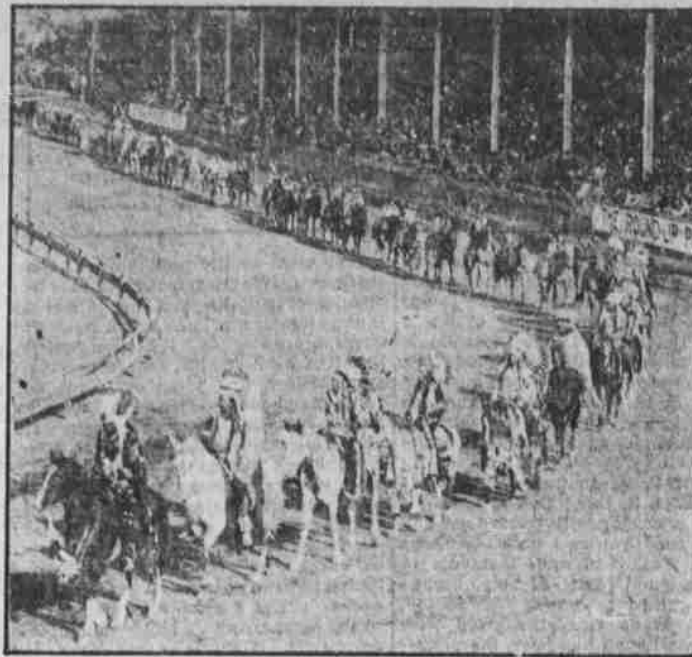
"Trees are not the only product around here, either," S. A. Miller, manager of the company, and incidentally representative from Umatilla county to the state legislature, said.

"We have one man whose boy is working for us. The father has been here 15 years, and this summer his 16-year-old boy has done some light work. So you see, we keep men in our employ and then give jobs to their boys when they get old enough to want a job."

Originate Specialties.
Nurserymen, in common with men in every other line of business endeavor, are constantly on the lookout for new varieties of fruit that show promise of being an improvement over existing varieties.

The Milton Nursery Co. has three specialties in which it takes particular pride. The Perfection peach is a variety that was discovered and introduced by them. It had its origin on Wild Horse.

Then there are two kinds of apples that claim the nursery for home. One is the Early Goodwin, which has proved popular, and the Spokane Beauty, discovered in Washington, has



Indians in Parade at the Round-Up.

the distinction of being one of the biggest apples in size that grows.

Besides nursery stock and orchard, there is a slight strip of ground on the farm that is devoted to alfalfa. This year about 30 acres of beans were grown.

"We find beans about the best crop we can grow for the benefit of our land," Mr. Hobbs said. "The plant stores nitrogen in the soil while it is growing, and then we use the hull, after the crop is threshed for fertilizer, spreading it over the ground and plowing it under. We find this the most satisfactory method we have ever tried of getting quick results with natural fertilizers. The beans are worth something on the market, too, but that is a secondary consideration with us."



This is the latest photo of Charles B. Warren, new ambassador to Japan, made just before leaving Detroit for his new post. With him are his three sons, Charles B., Jr., Robert and John.



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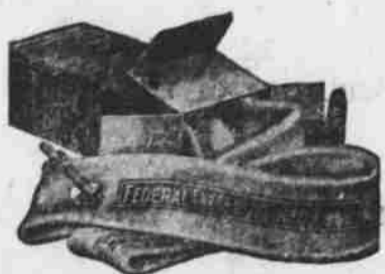
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