

XII. FARMING IN LORANE

Lorane valley provided, and still does provide, the resources to raise a variety of crops and livestock. Beef, sheep, dairy cows, goats, turkeys, chickens, hogs, rabbits, hay, wheat, oats, apples, pears, prunes, corn, filberts, hops and, most recently, grapes, have been raised on a large scale at one time or another in the area.

Jost Petrie first arrived in Oregon in 1882, and settled temporarily in Eugene City while he searched for the perfect property to buy. He came from Wisconsin with its rich farming soil. In a letter that he wrote on August 24, 1882, to his son, Channing, in Wisconsin, he said, "...I find everything pretty much as I expected except that the Willamette Valley is rather too flat for good drainage and consequently apt to be worked when it is too wet, to the injury of the Spring crops especially – Last winter and Spring (they say) was excessively wet and since the 4th of July there has been no rain in the upper part of this vally. Consequently all late crops are rather poor - I have looked over considerable of the country between here and Portland and also about Siuslaw and examined several places ranging from 200 to 1,700 acres with Buildings orchards etc ranging in price from 2 to 10 thousand dollars. These places are all among the foothills and better drained naturally with plenty of Springs and living water and wood conveniently near large towns or Depots and I cannot decide which I ought to buy provided I should buy either of them. I don't wish to get a place in the flatest part of the vally because it is too wet much of the time and the ballance of the time too dry and destitute of Wood and living water except on the margin of the Streams..." He eventually chose the former Cartwright Ranch in the Siuslaw Valley where he wrote of raising wheat, oats and barley as well as other crops.

Bill Moore Sr. and James Sanderson were in

partnership, raising purebred hogs on property north of Lorane near Stony Point. Harry and Ruth Jahnke had a herd of over 70 milk goats at one time. Eyansons and Williamsons had large dairies. Earl Gowing and Chancy Davis raised turkeys, and Gowing raised chickens, sheep and hogs, as well. There was also the more recent Peaceful Valley Rabbit Farm at the top of Stony Point which was formerly used to raise broiler chickens in the 1970s and 1980s.

Most farms in the Lorane Valley raised hay and grain which were used to feed the livestock during the winter months. Bill Mitchell had a greenhouse where he raised vegetable and flower bedding plants. The 7R Ranch on Cassidy Lane off of Ham Road had about 10 acres of filberts, and there was also a substantial amount of hops grown in the Ham Road area. And, of course, there were the large apple, pear and prune operations of the large orchard companies.

Before 1920 or so, most farming was done using teams of horses and oxen and by the sweat of one's own brow. By 1940, tractors were being used by many farmers, but others preferred to continue using their work teams either out of loyalty to the old way of life or because tractors were just too expensive to buy and operate for small farms.

Neighbors helped neighbors a great deal in the early days. It was difficult to pay wages, so work was traded in a fair and equitable manner. The work was usually hard, but, for the most part, everyone performed their duties. Hard jobs were made to seem easier because of the good-natured laughing and joking that friends and neighbors would carry on amongst themselves.

In the early days of farming in the Lorane valley, hay was cut and put up loose in the barn. This required very large barns and a lot of work to get it done. Hay was tossed by pitchfork into a wagon with sides on it,



Jackson daughter and her working companions at rest