

Augustin and Marie Raymond Farm

By Richard Engeman

The farm established by Augustin and Marie Raymond in about 1842 is in the mid-Willamette Valley in what is today known as French Prairie. The Kalapuya Indians of the Willamette Valley made good use of the fertile lands there, where the open landscape, kept clear by strategic burning, was dotted with fields of camas and groves of acorn-producing oak trees. The establishment of Fort Vancouver by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1825 brought French Canadians to the area, who had come to Oregon Country as fur trappers or engagés. After serving the company, a number of them remained, and many, including Augustin Raymond, settled on French Prairie. Raymond apparently started his farm in about 1842, and it is estimated that he eventually controlled more than a thousand acres.

Augustin Raymond—born in Québec in 1811 as Augustin Remon—married Marie Anne Servant, the daughter of Josephete or Josette (Okanagan) and Jacques Servant, at the St. Paul Catholic church in 1843. That same year, Willamette Valley settlers established Oregon's Provisional Government in Champoeg. Although the governing body had no legal authority, the men who served in it deliberated and passed laws, including a land grant provision for farming settlers.

The Raymond family, which came to include ten surviving children, ran a subsistence farm that provided much of what they needed, as food for themselves, or as crops or livestock that could be traded for other goods. Wheat quickly became the valley's principal product, traded to Alaska through the HBC's 1839 agreement with the Russian America Company or bartered or converted to flour for home use. Mission Creek, which headed on the Raymond land, powered an early gristmill a few miles north at Champoeg. Family history notes that the Raymonds were among the first to grow hops in the valley in the late nineteenth century.

One grandson, Henry Raymond (1887–1968), continued to grow hops and later turned to grain growing and dairying. In 1960, he sold the farm to his daughter and son-in-law, Dolores and Carlos Bustamante. The Bustamantes sold the dairy operation and by 1965 were growing row crops of vegetables—bush and pole beans, cucumbers, cauliflower, and broccoli—for both fresh market and canning use. They also grew grass seed and wheat and in 1969 established a roadside market stand to sell their vegetables.

The Bustamantes' farm, which included a sizable acreage inherited through the Raymond family, was designated an Oregon Century Farm in 1973. It is among the earliest Euro-American settled property so designated, having been continuously farmed by descendants since about 1842. The land, located south of St. Paul near the intersection of River Road Northeast and Davidson Road Northeast, is still in agricultural use.

Sources

Augustin and Marie Raymond Farm. Oregon Century Farm and Ranch Application. Oregon Century Farm and Ranch Program, Oregon State University. "CFR0363" Oregon Digital.

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