

MILTON NURSERY COMPANY

In 1862 Aaron and Samaria Miller with their firstborn, a daughter Louisa, moved to Sonoma County California near Santa Rosa. The trip was made by the old "Prairie Schooner" which took between three and four months. July 1866, their second child, Samuel Aaron, was born at Windsor, California.

Aaron and Samaria Miller with their two children, Louisa and Samuel left California with the William Nichols family who resided in the same vicinity and emigrated to the Walla Walla Valley located at Milton, in 1871. In 1872, Aaron Miller filed on a homestead of 160 acres near the town of Milton on the Walla Walla River and where the Milton Nursery Company is now located.

Miller desired to plant a family orchard. There was no nursery nearby where fruit trees were available for immediate planting, therefore, his father, having some knowledge of fruit tree propagation, suggested growing their own trees. The first year that they had trees ready for an orchard planting they also had a surplus. There was a ready sale to their neighbors. Soon they realized they were in the nursery business. The business was called the Aaron Miller Nursery. About the year 1888, one son, Samuel, joined his father in the business and it was called Aaron Miller and Son. In 1902, a second son, George W., also became a partner of the firm.

When Aaron Miller and Son made the addition of the third son, C. Bert, to the firm, it seemed advisable to incorporate the firm name to Milton Nursery Company. The officers were: Aaron Miler - President, Samuel - Secretary and General Manager, George - Vice President, and C. Bert - Treasurer.

Aaron Miller's died in 1925 at the age of 95. Samuel A. died in 1923 at the age of 98.

In 1950, George W. retired from the business and his interest was purchased by C. Bert who became the President and General Manager, and the firm is still operating under his management (1962). Since the establishment of this nursery firm, and to the present time, it has been owned and operated entirely by the Miller family, at the same location as the beginning. Besides C. Bert, the remaining son, there are three grandsons, one of whom is Evert S. Miller, Vice President, of the firm and one granddaughter of the founder, Aaron Miller, who have an interest in the company.

From the small beginning of one or two acres, the firm now owns 320 acres at the original location, besides operating a branch nursery consisting of 100 acres at

Puyallup, Washington. All acreages at both locations are entirely devoted to the propagation of nursery products, which are shipped to all parts of the United States and Canada. The firm's employees number from 50 year round and up to 100 during seasonal operations.

The Milton Nursery Company has the distinction of being the oldest nursery in the Pacific Northwest, and the oldest firm in the vicinity of Milton-Freewater.

Since its establishment in 1878, it has been a constant and growing support to the economy of the community. It is an outstanding example of family cooperation and good management.

Early History of the Milton-Freewater Area

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