



## Agenda Item 35

DATE: February 24, 2015

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Laurel C. Prysiazny, County Librarian  
Stephen Barile, Chairman  
Historical Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission

SUBJECT: Approve Historic Designation of the Fortune Family and Eskelsen Farms as Centennial Farms and placement on the Fresno County List of Centennial Farms.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION:

**Approve historic designation of the Fortune Family and Eskelsen Farms as Fresno County Centennial Farms and authorize the Chairman to execute the certificate for a Fresno County Centennial Farm.**

Approval of the recommended action will allow the Fortune Family and Eskelsen Farms to be placed on the County's Register of Centennial Farms comprised of local Farms with 100 years or more of continuous farming activity in Fresno County. The Historic Landmarks and Records Advisory Commission provides your Board qualified farms for placement on the Fresno County List of Centennial Farms. Approval by the Board of Supervisors encourages preservation of our County's history.

### ALTERNATIVE ACTION(s):

Should your Board not approve the recommended action the farms will not be placed on the Fresno County List of Centennial Farms.

### FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no net County cost associated with the recommended actions.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE REVIEW

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APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

Official Action of  
Board of Supervisors  
*Susan Bishop*  
Deputy

UNANIMOUS ☒ BORGEAS \_\_\_\_\_ MENDES \_\_\_\_\_ PACHECO \_\_\_\_\_ PEREA \_\_\_\_\_ POOCHIGIAN \_\_\_\_\_

DISCUSSION:

**Fortune Family Farm**

On April 14, 1910 Benjamin Hinton Barritt and Eliza Owen Barritt purchased a 640 acre parcel of land in Caruthers/Riverdale. The Barritts originally homesteaded the entire 640 acre section. When the last two children in the family inherited the property it was divided. Laura Barritt Cole still owns one-half of the section.

The farm currently has no buildings on it. There are wells, which water the almond orchard that is currently on the property. The Campos Brothers of Caruthers have leased the property for the last 20 years.

**Eskelsen Farm**

On October 6, 1911 Carl Eskelsen purchased 40 acres for \$500 at South West Ave. and Springfield Ave. in Fresno.

In 1913 Carl planted Thompson Seedless grapes on the southern half of his ranch. Over the next few decades a variety of fruit trees and vines were grown on the property. Carl was an early member of SunMaid when it was originally called the California Associated Raisin Company. The Eskelsen family continues to be members today.

Carl met a young woman from Denmark, Rasimne "Minna" Stockhom, in 1919 and they were soon married. Over the next six years they had four sons, Lars Ove, Robert, George and Harry. In 1927 Carl passed away, leaving Minna to raise the boys and to manage the family farm. Over time the boys took over the farm operations.

Rasmine passed away in 1951, leaving the boys completely in charge. George and Harry bought out Ove's and Robert's share of the property; they formed "Eskelson Brothers" in 1961. Harry passed away in 1997 leaving George as sole operator. George passed away in 2013, working on the farm up to just 6 weeks prior to his passing. The two wives Miriam and Jeanette are the co-owners of the original 40 acres today.

REFERENCE MATERIAL:

Centennial Farms Applications for the Fortune and Eskelsen Farms.