

GATEWAY III

Stories about people

Life of The Land
148 years of homestead tradition

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Life of The Land

148 Years of Homestead Tradition

By Laura Messman

Every time Sherry Millican drives her '94 Jeep Cherokee down Oregon Route 126, she passes a town marker crafted of oversized, chestnut-colored logs on the right-hand side of the road. The large white letters on the sign read "Walterville."

The town is named after Walter Millican, one of her ancestors who helped settle the McKenzie River Valley in the early 1900s. As the rolling green farmland whips by, she passes a street sign for Millican Road—a nod to her great grandfather, Robert Millican. About a mile further, she approaches a wooden arch at the entrance to a gravel road. A rustic metal nameplate that reads "Triangle 5 Ranch" sits overhead as she drives under the arch onto the dirt road and up to the 640-acre ranch that five generations of her family have called "home."

Millican is a homesteader someone who makes both her home and her living on the same plot of land. For her, it's more than her preferred lifestyle—it's the family business. She and her husband, Todd Richey, own and operate a ranch on her ancestor's homestead. It's a tough job that requires demanding labor from sunup to sundown as they struggle to keep the ranch afloat and meet modern standards. But the way she sees it, if the next generation can continue to drive under the Triangle Ranch 5 sign, it will all be worth it. "The future of the ranch—it can be anything we want to build it to," Richey says. "We've got the ground to do anything. Time is our biggest problem."

Though they are in their 60s, the couple continues to wake up every morning and

continues to wake up every morning and care for their animals, just as generations of Millicans have done before them. In 1865, Robert Millican joined the wave of pioneers settling the west in response to the Homestead Act of 1862. After boarding a ship in New York, sailing around the Isthmus of Panama to Portland, and walking from Albany to Eugene, Oregon, Robert received a John Latta Donation Land Claim and settled in Lane County. Four name changes and 148 years later, Triangle 5 Ranch is still run by the Millican family.

Today, the ranch boasts three original hand-built barns that stand as a testament to Robert's meticulous craftsmanship. The massive charcoal-grey barn that

towers over the acreage is one of the oldest in Lane County. Additionally, the same white, two-story house where Millican was raised has sat at the top of the dirt road for over a century. She and Richey follow in her ancestor's footsteps by preserving the original buildings, raising goats and horses and growing their own hay. They even use Robert's remaining agricultural tools.

"As you do your work you can think about how many hands have held this, how many hours of work and tedium and love have gone into making something that is great," Millican says as she gazes out the wide kitchen window at the land that bound her family together for hundreds of years. "When I look out on the field, I can see my great grandfather tilling the land. They were heartier people than I."

"We've got the ground to do anything."

She always knew keeping the ranch in the family would be a challenge. But she never imagined it would start so soon. Two years ago, the death of Millican's mother, Neva Millican, sparked a family dispute regarding her will. Neva left a quarter of the ranch to each of her four daughters, three of whom had no interest in living or working on the family's land. "Sherry's mom probably thought the sisters would play well and try to sell [their portion of the ranch] to Sherry," Richey says. "Well, that wasn't the way it went at all!" Millican's three sisters didn't see ranching as a practical means of making a living. Kathy Millican, her oldest sister, pursued her dream of having her own ranch and has since retired on a smaller acreage. Her other two sisters, Karen Coreson and Sandra Welker, chose a different lifestyle altogether.

"As I matured, the ability to earn a living on any farm decreased. The single-family farm became obsolete as a means to make a living," says Welker, a retired dental hygienist. "So I gravitated toward where I could make a living and that was away from the land." Though she acknowledges that Millican has a bet-

Not seeing the ranch as a practical or profitable venture, they decided to place their portions of the ranch up for general sale.

Lawyers were hired, negotiations were made, and bitter feelings transpired. Millican's sisters wanted to sell the land to a cattle rancher for around \$2.4 million, which would be split between the four of them. It was an offer that Millican and Richey

"I cannot sit here and see everything that has been our heritage bulldozed and burned"

couldn't afford to counter. Devastated by the potential loss of the family homestead and all the sentimental value that it carried, the couple was determined to fight in order to save the land. "I said to the girls, 'I cannot sit here and see everything

that has been our heritage bulldozed into a heap and burned,'" Millican says.

Despite what Richey describes as a strong reluctance from the three sisters to sell the land to his wife, they decided to hear the couple's business plan. Scrambling to counter the offer, Millican and Richey proposed to log \$2.6 million worth of trees for a profit that would be distributed three ways. The sisters weighed the couple's proposal and ultimately decided to take their offer.





“You either love it
or you hate it.
It’s hard work.”

But while Millican and Richey’s passion continues to fuel the ranch, its future remains uncertain. The fate of the land, the traditions, and the Millican homesteading lifestyle rests in the hands of their only son, Curran Manzer.

Manzer lives on the homestead with his wife, Michelle. After moving back to his ancestor’s land to help care for his grandmother, he decided to start his own taxidermy business and operate out of his grandfather’s old shop.

Like his mother, Manzer successfully integrates the old with the new. He believes that keeping the land in the family is vital, but his commitment to ranching itself is a bit more complicated.

He enjoys living and hunting on the ranch, but says he only feels connected with the animals when he hunts them. Although his vocation focuses on preservation, Manzer is unsure of how he plans to maintain the ranch for future generations, and has only vague plans for a possible succession.

Cover Rationale

Since Gateway 3 would be an academic magazine and story driven I feel that the audience would expect and simple and elegant looking cover that tells them the feature story, since there are probably only a handful of stories in the magazine. This is why I chose to only have one cover line that has the headline of the story that is the same as the headline on the inside so that the reader would be able to locate the story easily.

I placed the cover line where I did because it was the location that I believe that the reader would most easily be able to read the text. Placing it anywhere else would have made the text get lost into the photograph and make it more difficult for the audience to read. I sampled the color from the horses nose for the text to adhere it better to the photo.

For the masthead, I chose a large simple font in all capitals. I did this so that the audience could easily be signaled to know what the magazine title was, even from a distance and then, as they got closer they would see the tagline of the magazine and be able to distinguish what the content of the magazine would be. I did this by placing the tagline directly below with simple font. To connect the masthead and the tagline to the photograph I sampled the color from the barn for the font color.

I chose this photograph because I believe that it was the most powerful photograph of the ones offered and would immediately attract the attention of a potential reader. This would make them want to know what the story was about.

Layout Rationale

For the first spread of my layout I chose to do one large photograph on the left page to really grasp the readers attention. I chose the photo that I did because I think that it really grasped the hard work of the homestead tradition of the Millican family. On the right hand page I chose a two-column design wrapped around a pulled quote. I put bars on the side of each pulled quote so that it doesn't get lost in the body copy. I did this so that the reader would have a large portion of the story on the first page so that they could figure out if it was something that they might be interested in reading. For the masthead I used a strong font that tied in with strong theme of the story. I sampled the color from the horse's reigns and used that as the font color for the masthead. I also used this font color throughout the layout for the pulled quotes to establish a sense of continuity. The tagline and byline are directly below in smaller font as to not distract from the headline.

For the second spread I wanted to focus on the photography because that is something that draws a reader into the story. To tie together the first spread to the second spread I did another two-column design wrapped around a pulled quote centered above a horizontal photograph below on the first page of the spread. I chose this photograph because it gives the audience a sense of the Millican family's surroundings.

For the right hand page of the spread, I used a photograph of the family interacting inside the home to add variety for the reader. I wanted to show more photographs of a different shape to add variety and cropped one of the photo's to make it vertical and placed it slightly off center from the horizontal photo above so that the page didn't appear blocky. I matched the vertical photo with a column of body copy and pulled quote above to add symmetry to the page.