

# Lumber And Timber 'Started' Brookings' History

## Plywood Manufactured First In 1905 For Lewis & Clark Exposition Display

People of this day and age, used as they are to seeing plywood, have little or no conception of its beginning, nor of the story surrounding its development. Just to set a date for its beginning, let's go back to 1905, back to the days when Portland, Oregon, was planning for the Lewis & Clark Exposition.

At nearby St. Johns, Oregon, the first Douglas plywood was made expressly for display at this exposition. Maybe there will be readers of this issue of the Pilot who saw that exposition and that display. Those dozen panels shown at that time was the "beginning" of the plywood industry of today—the billion-dollar source of employment to many thousands of men over the west.

While plywood warrants high acclaim today, its widespread recognition has been long in accumulating.

At first the manufacture of the Douglas Fir plywood was carried on in a crude manner. The presses with jack screws to supply pressure, were made from timber. Animal glue was applied to the veneers with a hand brush as the first mechanical glue spreader was not installed until 1906. Similarly, the drying at first was accomplished merely by air drying supplemented by use of an ordinary lumber kiln with home-made veneer racks. It was not until 1915 that the first veneer drier was installed.

The panels were manufactured in two grades: "Two sides, and one side. The panels with two sides clear were sold to door factories and this was the primary use of plywood for several years. One side panels had a back with imperfections and was used primarily as stock for drawer bottoms, etc.

It was 1920 before the first plant was erected as a plywood mill, separate and apart from any other enterprise. Before this, plywood manufacturing was always a part of a door factory or a plant making boxes, crates, etc. Gradually the plywood industry developed until 1925 the production, based on panels of 3/4-in. thickness, had reached 150,000,000 square feet. In contrast, by 1946 the figures had increased to 1,390,000,000 and the estimated production of today is beyond comprehension. It is too soon, since more

machinery will be installed in the Brookings Plywood plant, to state with any accuracy the output of this plant.

Today there are more than 50 plywood manufacturers on the west coast. In Curry county a number of either peeler or complete plants are under construction, or in the early stages of production.

Of course, production alone does not characterize the development of the industry. Manufacturing fir plywood today is a highly specialized undertaking geared to machine production of a high quality, uniform product. Plywood is an engineered wood that capitalizes on the advantages of wood and overcomes the shortcomings of lumber. Plywood producers combine the skills and machines of America's mass-production technique to produce consistently high quality panels.

New machines and improvements to older equipment have caused constant increases in production and provided more efficient utilization of the raw material. Today with the careful selection of every piece of fir veneer so it will be used to the best advantage, and with the utilization of machines for repairing defects and joining together narrow veneers, the recovery ratio in plywood manufacture is about 2.3 to 1. That is, from a log scales to bring a given board footage of lumber there will be about 2.3 times that many square feet of plywood recovered.

# Brookings-Harbor Pilot

BROOKINGS, CURRY COUNTY, OREGON.

Section Four—Lumber

## It's A Shame To Haul In These Little 'Splindly Saplings'



Ross Putnam, who says he's the Paul Bunyan of these woods, told the Pilot he actually was ashamed of this picture. Came the Lily Festival, and he wanted a float in the parade. When his men came in with this "second growth" he nearly fainted. The thought behind the display, however, made a hit with the judges who were as liberal as they could be, giving him a first prize, but warned him to "never" let this happen again. He swore he wouldn't be so thoughtless again.

The most important single advancement in the production of plywood since it was first manufactured, is the manufacture of exterior, or completely weather-proof type of panels introduced in 1934. In 1941 there were 80,000,000 square feet of exterior plywood produced; in 1944 the production has increased to 330,000,000 square feet, which was nearly three times the amount produced the year before; in '46 the exterior production accounted

for a third of the industry's volume.

This development was due to a machine that applies heat and pressure at the same time to set the adhesives, as well as the formulation of an adhesive that when set, provides a permanent bond impervious to water, weather and other conditions.

Since 1938 the plywood industry has maintained an association almost continuously to promote the use of its product although the sale has remained directly in the activity of the manufacturers. Today, the industry, through its trade association, has an efficient staff to do quality control, promotion and product development.

Although the industry cannot fill the demand for plywood today, it is, through the association, accumulating much information for furthering the use of plywood when it again is plentiful.

The first commercial standard for plywood was established in 1932, with the co-operation of the U. S. Department of Commerce. Since then six revisions have been effected with the current standard (CS-47) established Sept. 15, 1947. The standard sets forth the grades and types of fir plywood that are manufactured and lists the testing procedure to be followed to determine that each panel conforms completely to its grade.

Another milestone in the development of the plywood industry of the Pacific northwest was the establishment of the Plywood Research Foundation at Tacoma in 1945. It is a separate organization supported by the plywood producers who already have appropriated more than a half million dollars for its operation and have pledged continued support. Its purpose, separate and apart from the testing and product development activities of the laboratory of the Douglas Fir Plywood Association are:

1. To develop means of using waste wood material resulting from present processing at plywood factories and in the forests.
2. To produce new products which the plywood factories can manufacture in addition to their present panels.
3. To improve plywood through chemical means.
4. To improve the production and properties of Douglas fir plywood through improvement in the processing and manufacturing equipment.

Unfolding the history of Douglas fir plywood has been at top tempo for the past fifteen years. During this period, it has increased production by more than three times.

Modern plywood plants, like that seen in Brookings, operating along the west coast, helps greatly the economy of the area, and at the same time gives builders a better product to put into more permanent buildings.

## Brookings History Began With Timber; Prosperity Is Still Linked With Lumber

There is no such thing as a written history of Brookings—at least there has never been any published either serially or in booklet form, but all will agree that this area really became known through its lumbering, back about 1912. That era stopped in 1925, and the area was dormant until the early 1940s when the Croft lilies again brought the eyes of the world to the southern part of Curry county and southwestern Oregon.

Shortly after the advent of the lilies, when an exodus of people to this section demanded building materials little thought was placed on the timber resources. It was then, and after the Washington mills began closing, did the timber attract any investment capital.

In 1945, and the years afterward, small sawmills appeared in the area, some growing larger, while a few gradually waned into non-existence.

Thought of Brookings as a plywood manufacturing center began as early as 1947, but arrangements never were completed—and not until 1951, shortly after the first of the year, did people take seriously the rumors of a plant being established here in this vicinity.

Like any progressive move, the announcement of this new plywood concern brought out divergent remarks by residents of the area. Some were exceedingly antagonistic, others saw the possibilities and began expanding to meet the demands which they knew full well were nigh at hand, right at the moment.

The announcement of Brookings Plywood Corporation came nothing short of an atomic explosion in Oregon, for immediately Brookings saw the greatest influx of residents any community in Oregon ever saw since days of the covered wagons. The tempo has not slackened appreciably since that event, either.

ber is that plywood not only is able to make a house more rigid, but almost impervious to wind, dampness, cold or heat. Its insulating qualities cannot be over-emphasized.

Plywood, which has almost the strength of steel, yet the lightness in weight of wood, is easy to handle in a construction way. There is no end to what a man with imagination and ability can go to achieve revolutionary building effects. Proof of this may be obtained from most any plywood dealer, or from Oregon State College all for the writing.

Homes of the future will be following the trend of using the facilities and opportunities offered by the plywood manufacturers. Each room of the home may be finished in a different design or different kind of wood, giving the effect of costly construction as a surprisingly low initial cost. Extensive use of plywood, in the end, will not only make a stronger and more durable home, but will add to the comfort sought in a home.

## Plant Is Modern

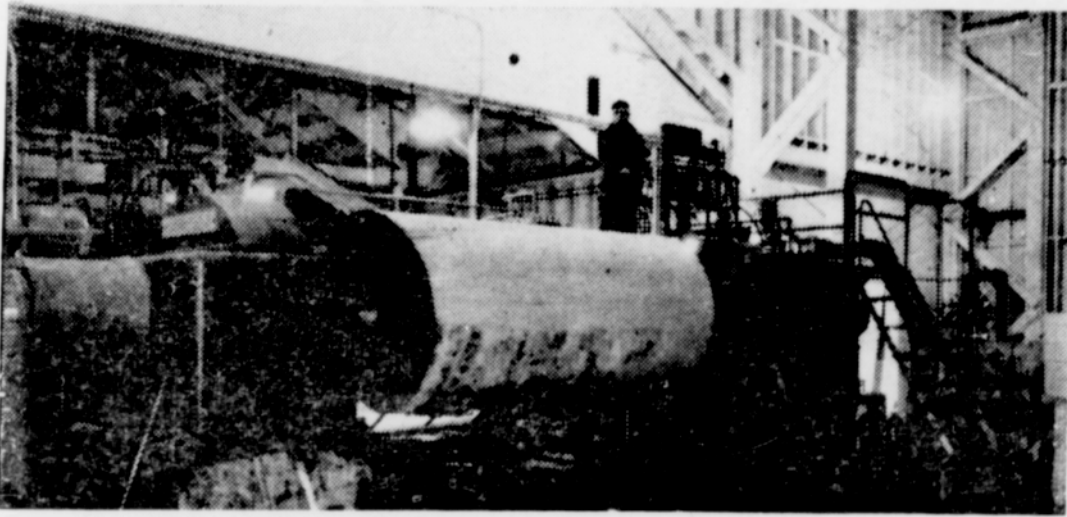
How does the Brookings Plywood plant compare with other plants over the country?

The Pilot has no way of making comparisons. However, it may be said without reflection toward the local plant that it may not be as large as some, but it is just as modern, just as efficient, and will be known eventually for the real product it produces.

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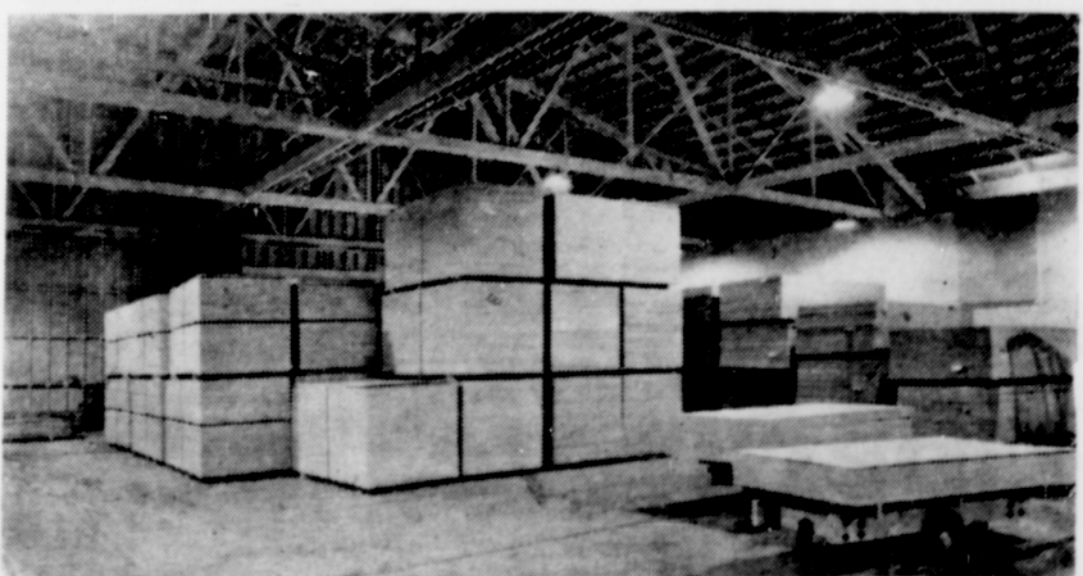
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## What Happens To Those Big 'Logs' At Brookings Plant



This miniature machines takes those big logs and "shaves" them into wafer-thin layers, and from these layers are laminated we all of us know as plywood which is being used extensively in building during this modern age. Plywood has tremendous strength, surpassing lumber many times the thickness in lumber from a sawmill. As in the case of lumber, there are many different grades and kinds—filling about every building need one might encounter in any type of construction.

## Plywood Ready For Shipment To Distant City Markets



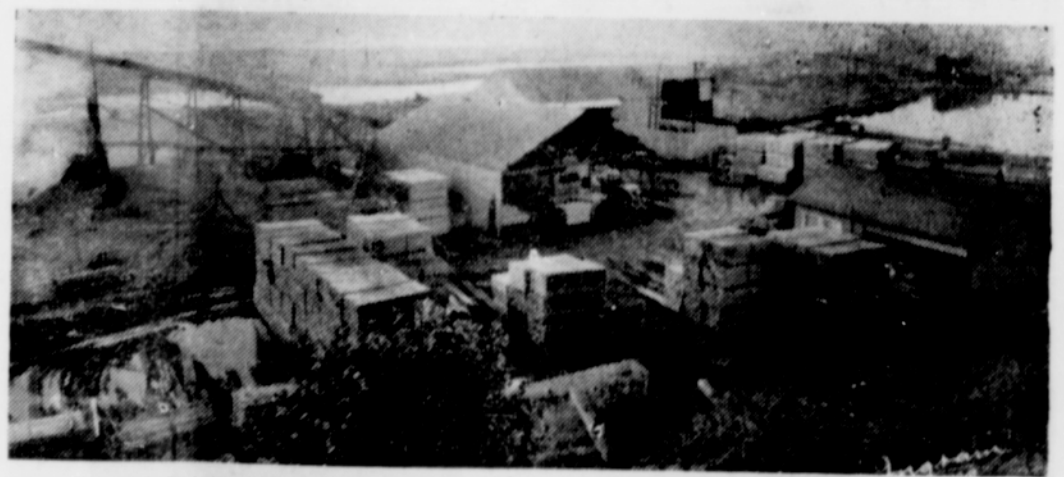
The economy of Southwestern Oregon, especially Curry County, is "dependent" largely upon this industry, as shown by the interior of Brookings Plywood Corporation. Started last June, this plant was put into operation shortly after the first of the year. Dedication, however, was withheld until May 3, when the corporation will be host at an open house. This firm has a timber supply which assures more than 30 years, officials claim. Native hardwoods will help in this score. Ingram Photos.

## Stores, Homes Are Made Better By Use Of Plywood

Plywood, which may be procured in many designs and finishes may be used in many, many ways to make that dream home you have longed for these many years. Booklets which are even larger than this edition of the Pilot are printed to show various methods of achieving certain effects wanted about the home.

First thing to remember by the prospective home-builder, is the simplicity of construction to be derived from plywood. Much may be written along this score. The second thing to remember

## Harbor Lumber Company Adds To 'Area's Prosperity'



On the Harbor side of the Chetco River is the Harbor Lumber Company plant which overlooks both the Pacific ocean and the Chetco River. This firm adds much to the economy of this area of Oregon, the fastest growing along the coast.



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