

# Continuation of the Slogan Page: Subject This Week, the Onion Industry

## ONION SET-GROWING ESTABLISHED LINE, SEED-GROWING COMING UP

The Onion Industry of the Lake Labish District is becoming a more far flung and inclusive one as it is developed under the direction of men of vision—half a hundred cars of sets shipped annually from the big onion district near the capital city.

Editor Statesman:

In the year 1882, there was begun the raising of that peculiar depression which extends between the Pudding river on the east and the Willamette to the west, known as Lake Labish. Then a morass of willows and swamp grass with here and there a patch of open water, it was an encumbrance to the surrounding farm land and a barrier to transportation. Where the Pacific highway now speeds its motor cars over the smooth asphalt, men whose hair is gray can remember the log-paved road that would shake a load of lumber into a tangle, however well placed and chained, at this crossing.

The first onion was worked with the fall to the west, as the distance to a convenient outlet was less from this direction, the natural divide or watershed being about south of the residence of M. L. Jones. However little result materialized from this beginning, and it was not until a drainage company was organized and a deeper ditch dredged, this time opening into Pudding river, that the first "white" development took place.

In 1917 the first crop of onions of an amount sufficient to prove the worth of this land for raising the product was harvested. Although these disappointed the growers to a small extent and gave the Labish onion for a time an unfavorable reputation among buyers on account of their poor keeping qualities, growers coming from near Beaverton and especially Sherwood, where were grown the best keeping onions in Oregon did much to better this condition.

### Quality Production Now

Now with the proper fertilizers and a few years of cultivation, opening the pores of the soil to air and sun, an onion is grown that is equal to any and better than most. Its growing reputation and a firm keeper has been aided by careful sorting and inspection at shipping time.

The natural increase of the crop as more land is made ready and better methods increase the yield will be hampered in the next few years by the increase of the acreage of mint, which thrives on the same type of soil—but this is another story.

### The Real Aristocrat

The size of the Labish onion averages large and of excellent shape, but the smaller bulb known as the "set" is the real aristocrat, and as this industry has now reached such proportions that half a hundred carloads are shipped annually, something should be told of their culture.

To Oscar Mahler is accredited the first sets grown on the lake but his neighbors, especially Seely Brothers, are growing a large share and by excellent culture and selection have given this little onion a reputation worthy to rank with other Lake Labish products.

### Handed Acre Sets

There is given to set growing about 100 acres, most of which is on the Hayes ranch near the east or lower end of the lake. The planting time is the same as the big onion, or as soon as the ground can be handled in the early spring. The ground for the smaller variety must be worked more thoroughly and pulverized to an even fineness.

About 600 pounds of chemical fertilizers are used per acre, which consists of sodas, potash and lime.

The large onions are spaced in rows about 15 inches apart and three to four pounds of seed used per acre for planting, whereas the sets have seven small rows one inch apart to a main row or section with a seven inch space between each seven-inch row. As it takes 30 pounds of seed to the acre it will be seen that there will be but little space between seeds or growing onions. It is this fact alone and not the variety that reduces the acre of the matured onion set.

In planting, a special drill is used which takes care of seven rows of one section at a time. A good grade of seed is demanded, but of such quality as for the big onions. Most of it comes from California.

### All-Hand Work

The cultivation must all be done by hand, even a hoe is of no use except in the seven inch space. Although great care is used to have clean land to begin with, weeds thrive and constant watch is kept to see that none appear.

The sets are ready for harvest in about 100 days, which brings the planting time in good dry weather, usually about the last of

July or first of August. Generally three rows or sections are pulled and windrowed together, as soon as they are thoroughly cured, which requires from 10 to 20 days, depending on the weather, they are hauled, tops and all, to the storehouses and placed in shallow shelf-like bins to await the time they are needed for shipping. A very few are topped from the field to take care of the first demands.

In the winter when the moist air has dampened the tops it is necessary to kiln-dry them before they can be cleaned. This requires 15 hours at a temperature of 110 degrees. Was to the kiln-tender who allows this temperature to rise a few degrees, for then the germ is killed and the set worthless. Fifty sacks are considered a "batch" for one drying. To get out a car of 300 sacks requires close to a week, night and day, of drying.

### Topping Machine

The machine used to "top" sets is an ingenious device and does not resemble the common onion topper used for the larger kind. It is more like a thresher or rubber. Fed between moving sticks which rub and shake off the tops readily on account of their extreme dryness, the sets pass over a screen or mesh which allows anything smaller than seven eighths of an inch in diameter to fall through. A fan takes care of the chaff. The smallest size used is three eighths of an inch. Anything larger than seven eighths is used for pickling onions, but so regular do they grow that few run either under or over these sizes.

The market for sets is usually in the north and middle east. The popular, early spring, "green onion" is the consummation of a "set."

### Wide, Certain Demand

The demand for them begins generally in October at a normal price of 3 1/2 cents the pound, increasing one-half cent per month until March, the end of the shipping. White sets have about one cent per pound advantage in the market over the browns, but are not as prolific or hardy as their darker brothers and there is usually more waste.

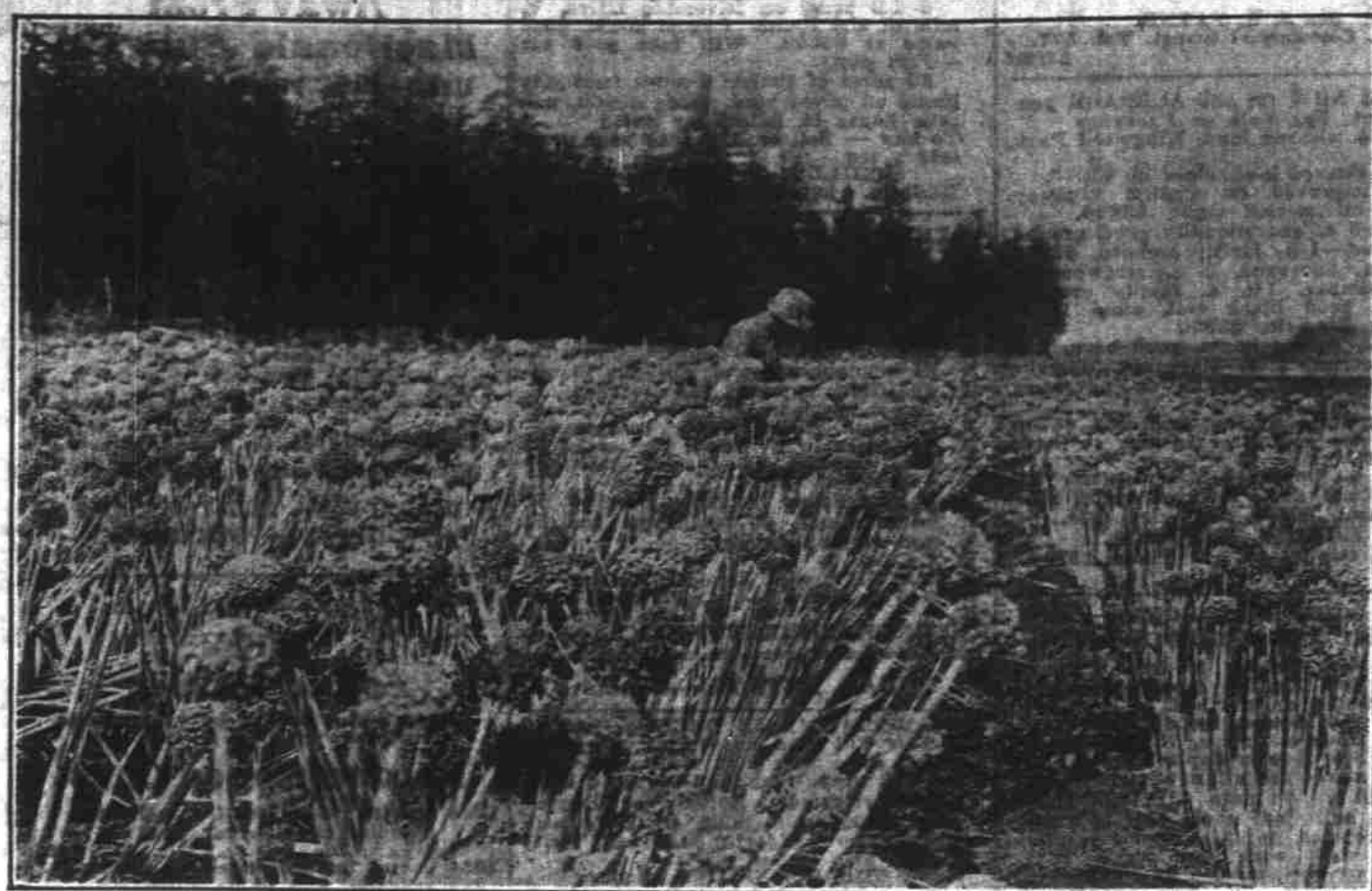
The yield from an acre varies as will any crop, but from 18,000 to 20,000 pounds is considered good; 28,000 pounds, although exceptional, has been taken from an acre on this ranch. A flurry or shortage the spring following this large yield boosted the price to ten cents per pound!

### Growing of Seed

Another branch of onion culture successfully tried by Seely Brothers (J. L. and W. L. Seely) is the growing of onion seed in commercial quantities. Many growers raise their own seed, but there has never been any effort to raise more than needed for local planting, though the quality of that grown was exceedingly good.

In growing this seed for the market it is always by contract and under the supervision of some seed house. The inspection of the parent onions is done by one of their representatives after planting. This is readily done, as the onion is covered with earth but placed in the bottom of a foot deep trench, and, as they take root and grow, earth is gradually filled in around them, little other cultivation is needed. This keeps the plant as it gains height and becomes top heavy from falling over.

Much difference of opinion exists as to where the best seed may



View of a mature crop of onion seed on Lake Labish land—Photo by C. V. Ashbaugh

be grown, whether on the lake, or moist bottom land, or on the upland. Experts generally conceded that the low land gives the best results.

Harvesting is done in late August or September. Care must be taken to handle the pods right side up, as tipping them or shaking them scatters the seed. A pair of strong scissors to nip off the top of the stalk with its pod and a sack swung from the shoulder to place them in is the harvester's equipment.

Special onion seed threshers are obtainable, but a grain thresher or clover huller may be made to work satisfactorily by regulating the teeth and screens. The yield from an acre of Lake Labish land is about 1000 pounds although 1250, which has been known, is not unusual. The price varies greatly. At present it ranges around \$1.25 the pound. The Californians who raise most of the onion seed used decline to say how much seed they procure from an acre, but good authority places it at near 350 pounds, and again the "wonder state" is outdone.

—CECIL V. ASHBAUGH, Brooks, Oregon, February 7, 1927.

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## MUCH BOGUS SEED IN U. S. LAST YEAR

(Continued from page 10.)

so poor the shippers wanted to get rid of it.

One of the startling phases of the situation is that there is not one bag of onions in cold storage in New York. There are about 60 to 75 cars in cold storage in Chicago. These are Colorado.

There are very few, if any, Californians in Kansas City, which, ordinarily, carries heavy supplies of California onions at this time of the year. There are practically no onions in California. The movement for the past two months has been very heavy there and the stock extremely poor. Chicken raisers have been buying onions at 15c per bag on the docks in San Francisco. When all of this poor stock is finally disposed of, which will be soon, California will have to draw her onion supplies from other climes. When you take into consideration that on the first of January, California usually has 500 to 1,000 cars of onions in common storage, that fact is also surprising.

### Good Oregon Onions

There are perhaps 400 cars left in common storage in Oregon. The

growers do not want to sell them. The quality is extremely good and they are holding for higher prices.

Naturally, when the estimate of September 1, showing 6,000 cars more than a year ago at that time was made, the poor quality stock that was in the ground was not taken into consideration.

### Seed Houses Blamed

Several seed houses in the United States are responsible for the failure of the onion crop and one or two of those seed houses cleaned up an enormous amount of money by palming off foreign seed on the growers as domestic seed.

### And such seed!

The most expert onion men have never seen anything like the onions, or rather, the alleged onions, that that seed produced. These little onions have got Joseph and his coat of many colors backed off the map when it comes to various tints, shades and hues. In Indiana, New York state, Ohio and other onion growing districts, which bought this foreign seed as domestic stock, onions are showing up that have all the colors of the rainbow. The onion men cannot account for it, unless the seed was mixed. One onion will show drab, yellow, green and red.

Most of the crops did not properly mature. With the low prices ruling throughout the fall, many acres of onions were left in the ground. Many farmers have not dug and they do not intend to, and quite a number of farmers are arranging to sue the seed men. It is reported that these several seed houses are entering suit against growers because the growers refuse to pay, alleging, they were sold poor, mixed, diseased seed, which was brought in from foreign countries and delivered to them as domestic seed.

Last year onion seed was extremely scarce. The seed crop was practically a failure. It develops, according to the best information at hand, that these few seed houses, operating through a broker, bought onion seed in Hungary, Holland and Germany and that it was cheap seed, at that. They sold it here to growers at \$7 per pound and some of these seed men, it is reported, have cleaned up fortunes—Pacific Coast Packer.

### More About This

Churubusco, Ind., Jan. 21—Harry McMichael, a grower and shipper of onions, has filed suit in the supreme court of New York against D. S. Woodruff & Son, of New York City, for \$32,280 alleged loss on an acreage of onions planted from 300 pounds of seed furnished by the New York firm.

In his petition Mr. McMichael states that he ordered 225 pounds of Southern Yellow Globe onion seed and 75 pounds of Southport Red Globe onion seed from the Woodruff concern, which delivered to him an inferior quality which it is alleged caused him to lose 22,500 bushels of yellow onions valued at \$86,460, and 7,500 bushels of red onions valued at \$8,820. This and other similar cases are attracting considerable attention in onion districts in Indiana and Ohio.—Pacific Coast Packer.

## No Houses, so Workers Commute to Home Town

NEWTON, Iowa.—Newton boasts only 10,000 residents, but it has commuters by the hundreds who come to work here daily from as far as 20 miles away.

More washing machines are made here than anywhere else in the world, and so flourishing is the industry that homes cannot be built fast enough for the increasing army of employees. So 300 of them commute an average of 15 miles from six nearby communities.

A million dollars worth of residences were built last year, but all were sold or leased before the plasterers were through. Still the house shortage keeps the city from counting some 1500 persons who would live here if they could.

An exact model of the Prince of Wales' Canadian ranch is being made in a London museum.

### OREGON BOXERS AT WORK

EUGENE, Feb. 8.—(AP)—The University of Oregon boxers are working under Perry Davis, instructor, to get in condition for the Pacific coast conference meet that is scheduled to be held in Palo Alto March 4. This is not an official conference match for Oregon, but it is an attempt to popularize boxing, and get it reinstated as a regular competitive sport in college circles.

### LEGAL NOTICES

#### SUMMONS

In the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Marion County. Myrtle Irene Morris, by her Guardian ad Litem, Clara C. Patterson, Plaintiff

vs. Harry Morris, Defendant

To Harry Morris, the above named defendant: In the Name of the State of Oregon: You are hereby required to appear and answer the complaint filed against you in the above entitled court and suit on or before the last day of the time prescribed in the order for publication of this summons, to-wit: on or before the expiration of six weeks next, from and after the date of first publication of this summons, the first publication thereof being on January 27, 1927, and if you fail to appear and answer, for want thereof the plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in her complaint, to-wit: that plaintiff's marriage to defendant be annulled, and that she be forever released and discharged from any and all obligations and duties arising from said marriage; that plaintiff may resume her former name, viz: Myrtle Irene Wunder, and that she have such other and further relief as to the Court may seem just and equitable.

This summons is served upon you by publication by order of Hon. L. H. McMahon, Judge of the above entitled Court, which order was made and dated at Salem, Oregon, January 26, 1927. Date of first publication, January 27, 1927. Date of last publication, March 10, 1927.

M. B. BUMP & D. D. BUMP, Attorneys for Plaintiff. Hillsboro, Oregon. D. D. Bump, residence & address Hillsboro, Oregon. 327-13-10-17-24 m-3-10

#### NOTICE OF FINAL ACCOUNT

Notice is hereby given, that the undersigned, as Administratrix of the estate of Carl E. Casbatt, deceased, has filed her Final Account in the office of the Clerk of the County Court of Marion County, Oregon, and that the 8th day of March, 1927, at the hour of 1:30 p. m., in the afternoon of said day, in the County Court Room of said Court has been appointed by said Court as the time and place for the hearing of objections thereto and the settlement thereof.

Dated and first published February 26, 1927. Last Publication March 2nd, 1927.

—M. C. Casbatt, Administratrix of the estate of Carl E. Casbatt, deceased. Feb. 3-10-17-24—M3

## BUSINESS OF ONION PRODUCTION HERE A STABLE ONE AND WILL GROW

Lake Labish Section Near Salem Has Become an Onion Growing Region That Has Now the Largest Acreage in the State—Slogan of Car Load to Acre Being Exceeded—Prof. Bouquet, High Authority, Gives the Cold Facts

Comparatively few states in the Union have as large an area of peat land as Oregon possesses. Many thousands of acres in the state are as yet undeveloped; but already there are several districts in which the producing power of the "organic" types of soil are amply demonstrated.

The commercial growing of onions is very closely associated with the development of peat lands in the state. Some 75 years ago the low lands of the Tualatin River valley were prepared for onion growing and an industry started in Washington county that became one of the most stable and valuable branches of the horticultural business of Oregon.

In the past few years the extension of the onion industry has naturally followed those areas that have many acres of rich peat bottom and thus a few years ago the hitherto undrained and unclaimed Lake Labish section became an onion growing region that has now the largest acreage in the state.

### Unusual Advantages

This section has unusual advantages for onion growing, the type of soil in the area being, of course, the chief reason for the onion growing development.

New peat or drained lake land is essentially rich in organic matter—the vital constituent of profitably producing soils. The nitrogen content also is high, but the phosphorous and potash comparatively low. The moisture holding capacity is unusually good.

Such are the characters of the Lake Labish onion lands. Furthermore they are practically virgin, unexhausted by years of previous cropping; for the industry of onion growing is comparatively young in the Labish district. A carload of onions per acre is the Labish slogan and it is in some cases being exceeded.

Oregon onion markets are increasing gradually in wideness of distribution and possible increase in volume of shipments. While there may be no unusual increase in planting for a few years to come, yet the business of onion production under the favorable conditions of the Labish country is a stable one that will continue to bring, year in and year out, profitable returns to growers and the community at large.

—A. G. B. BOUQUET, Corvallis, Or., Feb. 8, 1927.

(Mr. Bouquet is professor of market gardening at the Oregon Agricultural college, and is recognized throughout the country as high authority.—Ed.)

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## Princes' Teacher to Quit After 40 Years in Service

OXFORD.—Sir Herbert Warren, who is about to retire from the presidency of Magdalen College, Oxford, has been at the head of that school for more than 40 years and has imparted an air of social distinction to the institution.

He managed to get the Prince of Wales for a student, in spite of the fact that the Prince's grandfather went to Christ Church college. More recently Prince Chichibu, of Japan, elected Magdalen as his college and took the very rooms the Prince of Wales occupied.

An aviator was fined \$25 and costs for flying too low over Garnett, Kas.



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Upper scene: In the windrows and in sacks in harvest time. Lower scene: Weeding the growing onions.