

Christmas Tree Growing Thriving Industry

Timber Companies, Others Expand Tree Business in Area

By JIM FISHER

A thriving new fall industry has been expanding in southern Oregon during the past few years—the growing and cutting of Christmas trees commercially. Timber companies, farmers, and other woodland owners have made Christmas tree production either an important part of their forest management plan or the entire plan.

Last year, Josephine and Jackson counties ranked first and third, respectively, of the Oregon counties that cut an estimated 1,500,000 trees. Favorable growing conditions for trees, available manpower to harvest trees as a result of unemployment in other forest industries, and the ready market for trees in the heavily populated areas of California have contributed to the expansion of this industry.

Elsewhere in the nation, Christmas tree growing has been practiced for many years. The Christmas tree tradition has made this industry a multi-million dollar business with approximately 25,000,000 trees being cut annually.

Credit Luther
Some historians credit Martin Luther with the introduction of the Christmas tree. While on a stroll one Christmas Eve in the early 1500's, he was supposedly overcome by the beauty of the evergreen trees against the snow with bright stars shining overhead. Luther rushed home and attempted to duplicate this outdoor beauty for his family, using a small evergreen tree with lighted candles to resemble stars.

It wasn't until the American Revolutionary War that the Christmas tree tradition left Germany. The Hessian soldiers employed by England to fight the colonists grew homesick and erected Christmas trees, introducing them to the New World. The idea spread rapidly throughout the young country with Christmas trees appearing in Illinois in 1804, Massachusetts in 1822, and eventually to every state.

In Europe, the custom was becoming just as popular. Christmas trees were used in the Scandinavian countries in the early 1800's and spread throughout the rest of Europe by the middle of the century.

Ceremonial Use
Other historians claim that the Christmas tree was an outgrowth of ceremonial use of evergreens even before the birth of Christ. Egyptians, Romans, and Norsemen all used some form of evergreens as a part of their religious ceremonies.

In the United States, other decorations were added to the trees. Popcorn was used to resemble snow and fruit was added to provide color. The Star of Bethlehem became a familiar sight on top of Christmas trees. These decorations were changed and others added until the modern Christmas tree was born.

Just as important as the tree decorations was the part of the tradition that saw many families make the trip to the woods to cut their own tree. Increasing population, fewer available trees, and the increased value of the trees to both public and private landowners have reduced this practice greatly. This situation produced an opportunity for forest-land owners to commercially grow and harvest trees specifically for Christmas trees.

Meet Many Problems

Landowners planning on growing Christmas trees met many problems immediately. All land was not suitable for growing such trees. Some land was so unfertile that it took too long to produce a marketable tree. Other land grew trees too fast, producing poor quality trees that were spindly.

Land growing Christmas trees must be well located so that the grower can have good access to markets. Since the harvesting of the trees will generally be done in wet weather, the roads leading to the trees must be all-weather roads. Within the forested area, access roads must be planned to enable the grower to remove his trees.

Fire is an ever present danger to young trees during the dry summer months. Fire trails around the area and education in the dangers of uncontrolled fire will help to protect the investment made by the grower. Fire prevention posters, personal contacts, and cooperation with fire control agencies are all a part of the Christmas tree grower's work.

Theft Another Problem

With the increasing value of trees, loss by theft is another problem confronted by the landowner. Many cases have been reported where wholesale theft of Christmas trees have ruined a grower's harvesting and man-



TREES ARE SORTED—After Christmas trees are harvested, they are sorted into groups by species, grade and size for buyers to examine. Tags are attached to various

groups giving information and the number of trees in each group. Several thousand are harvested annually from land in Jackson county.

agement plans for a particular area.

A big choice of beginning Christmas tree growers is whether to begin with an area already growing trees or to start his own plantation. The area with trees must be thinned in most cases, the trees pruned to produce well-formed trees, and brush removed as a competitive growth. Many times thinning will produce merchantable Christmas trees, either with young trees or with the tops of older trees.

A tree's growth can be controlled by an experienced grower in several ways. Pruning of lower limbs of a tree will cause it to increase its density. The clipping of the branch ends will prevent the limbs from beginning too long and also will make the tree denser. The degree of pruning and clipping would vary, depending on the rate of growth of the tree and its reaction to such practices. Scarring a tree will have much the same effect.

Leave Whorl

Many Christmas tree growers leave a whorl of green limbs on the stump of trees they harvest. This practice, called stump culture, will often produce a better tree than the first cutting and in a shorter time since the root system is already established. Not all stump culture is successful, however, but in many cases when the most vigorous limb from the whorl is left to grow, a high quality tree is produced. The other limbs are cut off as soon as the vigorous limb is selected.

Growers who want to start a plantation generally order their seedlings from a nursery such as the Oregon State Forest Nursery at Corvallis or the new state nursery at Elkton. These produce high quality planting stock.

The most common species planted in Oregon is the Douglas fir with others such as white fir, noble fir, Shasta Red fir, grand fir, and silver fir being planted also. A new market is developing in California for pine as a Christmas tree and many growers are including it in their future plans.

Planting Done in Spring

The planting of these seedlings is usually done in the early Spring after the period of heavy frost is over but with the ground still containing sufficient moisture. Using spacing of 4 feet will enable 2,722 trees to be planted per acre. Other spacings can be used, but generally at least 2,000 trees are planted per acre.

Wildlings, that is, the naturally growing small trees, can often be transplanted successfully. For economic reasons, this practice is not suggested for commercial growers since it does require much more time than planting nursery-grown stock and is generally not as successful.

In cutting Christmas trees, the wise grower will only cut good quality trees. The remaining trees can be left for poles or timber. Standard grades have been established by the federal government to use in the buying and selling of trees. Premium, number one and number two, are the suggested grades. Other trees are culled.

After the trees have been cut, they are gathered together and graded. The different grades are sorted and bundled to await shipment.

Stumpage Prices Vary

Stumpage prices vary widely from a few cents to 75 cents per tree. A grower can either wholesale his trees to a buyer or haul them to the market area himself and retail them in stands. Timing in both cutting and selling is very important with the market being ever changeable during the last few days the trees are sold. Market surpluses can ruin a grower's chances for a fair price.

Many special practices can be used to increase a grower's business. The taking of orders in

advance for a custom tree is often done. Tagging trees with a card bearing information on the Christmas tree plantation is another novelty used. If a plantation is located near a populated area, a do-it-yourself method of cutting marked trees makes the customer select his own tree and cut it himself. Trees can also be painted or sprayed with colored material to produce a different style of tree.

The last session of the Oregon state legislature passed a law requiring that individuals transporting six or more Christmas trees at one time over Oregon highways must have evidence of ownership unless he is the original owner or common carrier is being used. This evidence would include a bill of sale telling the original owner's name and address, the number of trees by species, and the legal description of the land on which they were cut.

This same information is given on the Oregon State Board of Forestry's Christmas tree permit, a copy of which is mailed to the landowner.

Becoming More Popular

Christmas tree growing is becoming more popular each year, despite the fact that for growers planting young trees, a waiting period of from five to 10 years is necessary before any income is realized from the investment. Landowners have seen how by just having trees growing on property the value of the land increases.

Some of the more active Christmas tree growers banded together to form the Southern Oregon Christmas Tree association, a chapter of the Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree association which in turn is associated with the National Christmas Tree association. These people meet to discuss their activities and problems throughout the year. New members are always encouraged to participate and field trips to Christmas tree areas are frequently made.

Several of the growers in Josephine county have been harvesting Christmas trees for more than 15 years. Their sale receipts and the excellent condition of their present Christmas tree stands point the way for others to follow in making every day of the year Christmas Day when it comes to the growing of trees.

Movie Star Mobbed By Photographers

Tokyo — Bosomy Jayne Mansfield was nearly mobbed Saturday by a small army of Japanese photographers on her arrival with the Bob Hope troupe.

The usually-blaze photographers pushed open a wire gate and hurdled a two-foot-high barrier to crowd around the blonde Hollywood actress when she stepped down from the plane at Haneda airport.

While some 200 photographers maneuvered for the best angles, Miss Mansfield smiled brilliantly and said: "I am very honored to be here. This is one of the most beautiful places in the world."

OWNER SENTENCED

Cairo — The owner of a building which collapsed last month, killing 26 persons, has been sentenced to two years imprisonment and a \$27,000 fine. A Cairo court Thursday ruled Imam Enani responsible for faulty construction of the seven-story structure. His fine will be paid to survivors of the victims.

COLLISION KILLS DOE

Greenville, Miss. — A young doe was killed yesterday when frightened by a loaded school bus. The deer ran at full speed into a barn door.

National Guard News

By MARGARET BEHNKE

Commanding Company A, 186th Infantry, 41st division is First Lt. Donald M. Ivie, Lt. Ivie is a local man, having completed the major part of his schooling in Medford schools, and graduated from Grants Pass High school in 1942.

In September, 1943, he was inducted into the Army, and having completed his training served as a squad leader for a rifle squad in the European Theater. During this period he was awarded the Bronze Star. He is also entitled to wear the EANE service ribbon, American Theater Ribbon and the Victory Medal. Lt. Ivie was discharged from the Regular Army in January, 1946, as a staff sergeant.

His career in the National Guard began when he enlisted in Headquarters Company in July, 1950. Awarded a second lieutenant commission on the merits of his prior service and written examinations, he served in various officer's assignments with Headquarters Company and attended an Associated Company Officers Course in Ft. Benning, Ga. After completing the course in 1954, he served another year in Headquarters Company before transferring to Company A in August, 1955, as executive officer under Captain Bert W. Reibe. When Captain Reibe left for Ft. Benning in September, this year, Lt. Ivie took temporary command of Company A in his absence.

As a civilian, Donald Ivie is employed as a driver-salesman for Jorgensen's Dairy. He and his wife, Helen, who is employed by American Home General Insurance Agency, now reside in Central Point.

Tuesday, Dec. 17, Company A's training schedule consisted of three classes. "Technique of Fire and Combat Fire" instructed by Sgt. Adrian Van Horn and Cpl. Paul Juveland; "Grenades," taught by Sgt. George Holbertson and Sfc. Joseph Nolan; and "Machine Gun Familiarization," instructed by Cpl. Bill Cardwell, assisted by Cpl. Raymond Stotler.

Sfc. Loyal Goodnough of Company A left Dec. 3 for Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., to attend a Student Metal Working school. Sfc. Goodnough is a maintenance man at the ordnance depot in Camp White.

Seaman Apprentice Ralph Waldo, a former private in Company A before enlisting in the Navy, visited the Armory Tuesday night. He is home for Christmas leave before reporting to Bainbridge, Md. Ralph says: "You can quote me—being in the Guards before enlisting helped me a lot and also the longevity helped in my pay."

First Lt. Jack Phillips reports the rifle matches are nearly completed in the company, with the last match to be held Dec. 27. At this match, headquarters personnel, consisting of company cooks, supply and administrative people will form a team to compete against second platoon, which now leads with a total score of 1,472. Weapons platoon's total score took second place with 1,265, followed closely by first platoon with 1,257, and third platoon scoring a total of 1,147. High individual scores to date are held by M. Sgt. Jack Burns, 531; First Lt. Jack Phillips, 505; Cpl. Charles A. Brown, 441; Pvt. W. V. Waterhouse, 435; and M. Sgt. Bill Matejka, 433.

M. Sgt. Jack Burns also scored high individual for one match with 185 points out of a possible 200. The match has consisted of five rounds fired from the prone position, five rounds kneeling and 10 rounds standing. Top scorers from the rifle matches now being concluded will be selected as a company rifle team which will fire in the first battalion eliminations commencing Jan. 12, 1958. The battalion tournament will consist of the two Medford Guard companies, Company C of Grants Pass, Company B of Cottage Grove, and Company D of Roseburg.

During January, Company A will award trophies for the match, one to the winning platoon, and one to the high individual scorer.



BIG BUSINESS—Placing and decorating Christmas trees, such as the one shown above, has become a multi-million dollar business in the United States. More and more emphasis is being placed on quality trees both by the seller and the buyer. Christmas tree farms are becoming more popular in areas such as southern Oregon where weather conditions are considered good for growing fine trees.



PLANTING TREES—One of the more recent Christmas tree plantations in southern Oregon is the one owned by Hunter and Best of Ruch. Above, they are planting trees to help offset lumber market changes and to insure some employment for their employees when their sawmill must close down. They plan to plant several hundred acres in trees.

College Boy Saved By Helicopter

Estacada — A 22-year-old Walla Walla college student Friday night was rescued by helicopter from a river island where he and a companion had been marooned after their canvas boat overturned in swirling waters of the Clackamas river.

Rescued was David McClain, of 13717 Southeast Arista road, Milwaukie. McClain's companion, 22-year-old Bill Evans, also of Milwaukie, (13100 King rd.) managed to swim to shore after their 17-foot foldboat was flipped by a large wave and sunk.

The dramatic rescue by air, made after dark at 6:13 p.m., was by an Air Force helicopter piloted by 1st Lieutenant Arthur Bennett and Dennis Chase.

McClain and Evans are both students at Walla Walla college at College Place, Wash.

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NASSER TO SPEAK

Cairo — Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser will make a major policy speech at Port Said Monday to mark the first anniversary of the withdrawal of Anglo-French forces from that city, official sources said Saturday.

It has been reported that there was a good turnout for "music night," despite the bad weather.

PROSPECT

Cafe Closes For Winter

By MICKIE LARSON

Prospect—Prospect Cafe and Tavern closed Sunday, Dec. 15, and will remain closed for about three months.

Proprietors Mr. and Mrs. Bill Morse and Morse's mother, Mrs. Rena Hamilton, left Monday for Muskogee, Okla., where they will spend Christmas.

After the first of the year they will tour Old Mexico and then visit Florida and the southern states. They will return to Prospect to open the cafe about April 1.

Mrs. Earl Robinson returned home from the Osteopathic hospital in Medford Dec. 14.

Mrs. Louis Love is at home now, after being confined to the Rogue Valley Memorial hospital with pneumonia.

Miss Darlene Nye, who is attending college at Nampa, Idaho, is home for the holidays.

Larry Moore celebrated his eighth birthday Sunday, Dec. 15, with a party attended by 17 children from the second grade.

Mr. and Mrs. John Malon of Medford, visited at the home of their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Rusty Burge, Dec. 15.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Oneta and daughter, Diana Moore, of Lakeview, visited Carl's brother and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Moore over the weekend.

The Peppers are sponsoring a semi-formal "snow" ball to be held Jan. 11. Queen candidates for the dance have been chosen from each class. They are freshman, Marilyn Valentine; sophomore, JoAnne Yates; junior, Loretta Orgain and senior, Joyce Moore.

Mr. and Mrs. Ted Jantzer and family, who are vacationing in the southern states, plan to return before Christmas.

Miss Patsy Pope of Payette, Idaho, is visiting friends and relatives in Prospect and plans to remain here until after Jan. 1.

The big Christmas tree in Prospect is very impressive at night, with its colored lights glistening on real snow.

Mr. and Mrs. Vincent McElmurry moved to Roseburg recently. Debbie McElmurry has been ill with pneumonia.

The Cub Scout pack meeting has been postponed until the latter part of January.

Mr. and Mrs. Marc Smith will spend their Christmas vacation in San Diego, where they will visit Mrs. Smith's mother. Smith is boy's physical education instructor at Prospect school. Also vacationing in the south will be Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Rochester, who will visit Mrs. Rochester's family in Long Beach, Calif.

Les Morgan returned to his school bus route Dec. 16 after having been in the Veterans' hospital in Portland.

Joe Covey and Leland Gitchel left Dec. 19 for San Diego, where they will spend the holidays.

Mrs. Edward Town was honored recently by two pink and blue showers. The first was given for her by the Lady Lions, at which 25 guests were present. The second was given by Mrs. D. J. Jewell Tuesday, Dec. 17.

It has been reported that there was a good turnout for "music night," despite the bad weather.

The Prospect PTA met Monday evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Rochester to sack candy for the school program.

Mr. and Mrs. Del Orgain and daughter, Loretta, leave this weekend for Canute, Okla., to spend Christmas with Orgain's parents. They will return about Jan. 1.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Vannice are to spend Christmas with their oldest son in Corvallis.

The Church of the Nazarene will hold their Christmas play Sunday, Dec. 22, at 7:30 p.m. Santa Claus will be there with treats for the children.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Boothby have announced that they will serve coffee and cookies to persons who come into their store Dec. 24.

Mrs. Lawrence Sanderson spent Monday, Dec. 16, at the home of Mrs. Dick Larson. The women made Christmas decorations.

Despite the bad weather, "Holiday House" was reported to have been a success, with several persons from other communities making the tour of the decorated homes.

Road Conditions Listed By Officials

Salem — U. S. Highway 101 was open to one-way traffic 11 miles north of Florence Saturday where high water damaged a bridge, the State Highway department reported.

A little water was reported on the same highway just south of Coquille but more than a foot was expected over the highway at high tide this afternoon.

Highway officials in their morning report of road and weather conditions said Oregon Highway 42 was closed by high water between Myrtle Point and Coquille with the crest expected about 11 a.m.

Six inches of water covered the Corvallis-Eastside highway at Van Buren bridge.

Chains were required for travel at Siskiyou, Green Springs, Santiam Pass, Willamette Pass, Chemult and Seneca.

Motorists were advised to carry chains at Government Camp, Warm Springs Junction, and Ochoco Summit.

Biggest overnight snowfall was reported at Austin with 18 inches. Ten inches fell in Santiam Pass and seven in Willamette Pass. Four inches at Government Camp brought the total roadside snow to 28 inches.

Taps Sound For Basie Jazz Man

New York — Walter Page, 57, bass player who helped Count Basie bring jazz to New York, died Friday in Bellevue hospital of a kidney ailment and pneumonia.

Page's career began in Kansas City when he was 20. He played the tuba and bass saxophone until 1926 when he then switched to the string bass and organized a band called the Blue Devils. He was still with the same band when Count Basie brought it to New York in 1935.

SANTA TOO HURRIED
Dothan, Ala. — Santa Claus, portrayed by Art Creamer, was late for the Malvern Baptist church Christmas party. A policeman stopped him for speeding.

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