

Veteran Packers Reflect On Fruit Processing Changes

By MARY ALICE BRUSHA
The Rogue Valley's oldest industry is the pear harvest, and the multitude of workers employed in this crop annually are the packing house employees. Some of the veteran workers are still around and still working. Others are retired. Within the thirteen local plants are found packers who remember their beginning days.

Clarence Pankey, now retired, spent 55 years in the pear industry and started as a packer at Central Point in 1908. He recalls the early days with a chuckle.

"The weight of each box was a flat 52 pounds. The packer sorted, sized and packed the fruit. After a packer had packed 50 boxes he had to go home for the day." Pankey moved from the packing bench that paid four cents a box to the lidding job. He later went to work for Raymond Reter where he was employed as a packing foreman. He was promoted to packing superintendent, a job he held until his retirement from the Reter Fruit company several years ago.

Walked To Work
Ray Reter said he first became involved with the pear business when a lad of 16 years. He walked to and from work until he could save enough money to buy himself a bicycle. He didn't have to dodge the cars in those days, just the holes in the gravelled road, and had to stay out of the way of wagon teams and horses. The lady packers were transported to and

from work either in wagons or surreys.
Bob Root of the Myron Root company, began his packing career under the supervision of Pankey. It seems he was left in the foot bin, size 195's, until he learned how to pack. A week before school started he was moved up one bin to the 180's. Fannie Whitman, recalling the pioneer days, said the packing season was of longer duration. It began in August, lasting into January. The packer had no paper needle to hold the paper in place then. The loose paper was placed on the left side of the packer. For finger stalls, the packer wore a rubber band around her thumb. The pack was different from the pack to-day. The first layer was packed in one direction and the next layer reversed. The packing hours were long. At five cents a box her biggest day was \$5.50.

At Southern Oregon Sales
Mrs. Velma Singler, who was employed for 35 years with Southern Oregon Sales says she believes the only two places in the packing house she hasn't filled are at the dumping and lidding machines.
She clearly remembers the first packing benches she used. The benches were not movable. When the packer moved up the belt she had to pick up her box and move onto the next bench. The fruit was brought to the packer on a wide belt. The packer sized her own fruit for packing.

Velma was employed for many years as an instructor at the local packing school. She thinks there have been some 2,200 students taught how to pack at the school since it was first started 25 years ago. Like Pankey, Velma has retired from the industry. She says she enjoyed every minute of it. Students in high school and college have been able to earn money which enabled them to help with the expenses of their education. Young housewives helped meet household needs with their pay checks from the pear harvest.

Florence Drake of Phoenix said she learned to pack in an orchard packing house minus all the modern conveniences. In 1921 she was hired by the Bear Creek Orchards and continued to pack there for 27 years. She says the sizing in those early days was the problem. A packer had to be almost an artist in order to work. It was nothing to see several unfinished boxes sitting around on the floor with only one layer in the box. The packer packed a few pears in one then the other. Only the exact size could be used in each individual box because of the weight required by the management.

The spray dope was wiped from the pears with the gloves worn by the sorters. After packing the gloves were washed by the men and hung up to dry for use again the following day. The hours were long, 12 through the week, five on Saturday, and during the peak of the season all day Sunday.

At Rogue River
The present packing supervisor for the Rogue River Orchards is Mrs. Jess (Vera) Cummings. She has been an employee of the company for 23 years. Beginning as a packer, she worked for Elmer Adams who retired a few years ago. She has never packed for any other shipper, and is of this date the oldest employee.

Lloyd Caton, the packing superintendent for the Myron Root company began his employment with the firm back in 1933 as a packer. In 1937 he was hired on a permanent basis. His promotion to superintendent soon followed. Once there were three generations of one family packing for the company in the same season. Nora Baker and Ethel Hockersmith were two of the original packers. Both have since retired from packing.

In 1936 the Myron Root company purchased a sizing machine from the Food Machinery company. That machine is still in use at the plant. Other than the addition of new tubs and a few minor repairs it is the same.

The first sizing machine brought to the valley was in 1917. It was set up for the Parsons and Barwell Fruit company and was manufactured by the Cutler Manufacturing company of Portland. This particular type of machine was devised for apples, and according to Raymond Reter, it wasn't successful in sizing pears. The Cutler machine sized by weight.

The first successful divergent sizer was brought to the valley in 1928 and was devised by Floyd (Cookie) Cook.
Happy day for the packers—no more picking, waiting for the correct size. The only worry after that was the weight of the box after it was packed.

Jim Semple, packing superintendent for the Nye and Naumes company, was once a packer himself. He began at the Newberry company in 1938. A student in high school at that time most of his earnings went towards his education. After a few years as fruit inspector for the state Jim was hired by the Nye and Naumes company. Jim believes that Mrs. Dora Blanchett, a packer, has been with the firm longer than any of the other employees.

However, the packing foreman Manual (Red) Liebman of that company, is one of the veteran packers of the valley pear industry.

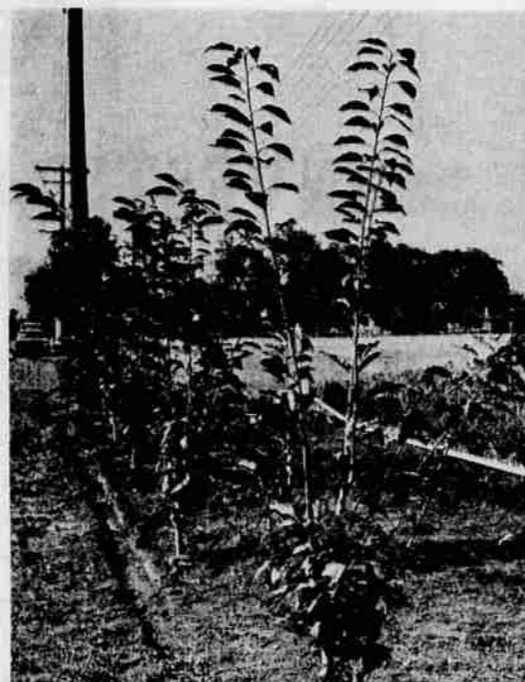
Mrs. Mabel Penland, the packing superintendent for the Modoc Orchards, is also a former packer. However, she began packing in California in the apples and oranges in 1929. For over 20 years she has been with the firm. She is also the supervisor for the local pear packing school. Marjorie Pearson has the record for the longest time in the packing operations at Modoc.

George Anderson, superintendent for the the Gorden Green company said their veteran packers are A. C. Puckett and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Rasmussen. The plant, formerly known as Stagecoach Orchards, is now in operation in the old Modoc packing house on Fir st.

This is not a complete list of all the packers from the pioneer days of the industry, only a few, but of the hundreds of persons employed in the pear harvest all seem to share a certain project in mind. The wages earned by the housewives, high school and college students are spent right here in the valley.



CORN INSPECTED—Experimental crop of corn planted as part of an irrigation and crop research project financed by Pacific Power & Light and conducted by Oregon State university specialists on the Glenn L. Jackson farm in Linn county was inspected Tuesday by Dr. Dan Evans, left, OSU soils physicist, and Glenn Jackson, Medford, owner of the farm east of Albany. Five-year program seeks to learn ways of raising higher-value crops on so-called "wet soils" of western Oregon, to add to agricultural economy of Oregon.



NEW ROOTSTOCK—The F12-1 rootstock which are bacterial canker tolerant and are being used to propagate new cherry varieties are being grown behind the office of the Southern Oregon branch experiment station on Hanley rd. These were shown to approximately 30 farmers and visitors touring the station last week.

DHIA Shows Gains In Milk Production

Dairy cows have been producing about three per cent more milk, on the average, than they produced the year before each year since 1950 according to Earle Jossy, county extension agent.

Each year since 1950 dairy cattle in the United States have increased the amount of milk produced per head by three per cent. This amounts to a 36 per cent increase in production per cow in the 12-year period.

This record is valuable. It points out the low producing cows which may be eliminated from the herd. It points out the high producing cows and families of cows from which replacement heifers can be kept. It is useful in determining an efficient feeding program. It also tells the dairyman how his herd compares with the other herds in the area.

Medford Area Gets New Vet

Salem — Three veterinarians with the meat inspection services of the Oregon Department of Agriculture will shift their locations.

Dr. Ernest Watkins, who has been at Eugene and with the department since November, 1961, will go to Medford the first of September to serve the Southwest Oregon area formerly served by Dr. Charles Luker. Dr. Luker resigned to take a position with the screw worm control program in Texas.

Filling the position at Eugene will be Dr. W. R. Joneschild, who joined the department in April, 1962, and has been at Albany.

The Albany post will go to Dr. Richard H. Jurdin. He has been working out of McMinnville since joining the department in May. For the present the McMinnville position will remain vacant, with the work done by men out of the Salem office and a temporary employee.

Dairy Foods Drop in 1962; Cheese Up

Salem — Oregon plants manufacturing dairy products used less whole milk in 1962 than in 1961 but nationwide there was a slight increase in the amount of whole milk used in manufactured dairy products.

Totals supplied the Oregon department of agriculture by the U.S. Department of Agriculture showed an estimated 64 billion pounds of milk used nationally in manufacturing dairy products. This was an increase of one per cent above 1961.

Oregon's 491,616,000 pounds of milk used were three per cent below the 1961 use.

In Oregon the butter plants used 44 per cent of the total manufacturing milk and American cheese plants 33 per cent. Other manufactured dairy products used the remainder.

Butter Drops
Oregon butter production in 1962 dropped seven per cent below 1961 and cheese production that year showed a two per cent decline from the previous year.

On the other hand ice cream production was two per cent above the 1961 figure.

Total butter production for Oregon in 1962 was 11,546,000 pounds, compared with 12,423,000 in 1961. The 1962 figure for cheese production was 20,008,000 pounds, while the previous year it was 20,320,000 pounds. Ice cream production reached the 5,679,000 gallon mark in 1962.

Nationally the production of Italian cheese, cream cheese and other than Cheddar types of whole milk American cheese was at a record high in 1962. Also topping all previous records in 1962 were creamed cottage cheese, ice milk, Mellorin-type frozen desserts, nonfat dry milk for human food, dry whey and plain condensed skimmed milk.

OREGONIAN NAMED

Salem — Paul Rowell, chief of the Agricultural Development Division of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, has been appointed chairman of a three-man task force to make a study of marketing and transportation matters that might need the attention of the Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture.



SHARES CANDY—Julienne Essen, 3, shares her candy with a yearling from her father's heretofore ranch. Her dad, Jene Essen of Charter Oaks, Calif., and a Los Angeles county fair exhibitor, holds the animal. (UPI)

Care of Berries Follows Harvest

By DON BERRY
County Agent

Care and training of trailing berries such as boysenberries, blackberries and loganberries should be continued even after harvest.

Training the canes during August will give a six to eight week period for the new canes to "harden off" on the wires before cold weather occurs. Although canes which are on the ground are not as exposed and therefore are less subject to winter injury than the canes put up on the wires many growers prefer to put the canes up after harvest.

Cleaning out all of the old canes and burning them will help to reduce the amount of leaf and cane spot disease in the field next year. Canes which have been put up on the wires in the fall may be sprayed with a bordeaux or fixed copper spray in the fall to help prevent disease. Also, chemical weed control is easier to apply on canes which are already on wires.

Washington—(UPI)—Mohammed Zahir Shah, ruler of Afghanistan, arrives in the United States Wednesday on a 12-day get-acquainted visit to promote friendship for his mountain kingdom.

Negro Student, White Man Wed

New York (UPI) — The first Negro girl admitted to the University of Georgia married a white Southern student at the university last spring, it was disclosed today.

Charlayne Hunter, whose arrival on the Georgia campus two years ago touched off rioting, was reported to have secretly wed Walter Stovall, son of a Douglas, Ga., mill executive.

The couple expect a baby in December, according to the New York Times, which published an interview with them today.

Miss Hunter, 21, and her 35-year-old husband are living in a one-room apartment in Greenwich Village. A journalism major at the university, she moved to New York after graduation and became an editorial assistant on the New Yorker magazine. Stovall worked for the Atlanta Journal during the summer, and arrived in New York Friday.

"This is the end of the world," Walter quoted his father George Stovall, as saying when he learned of the marriage.

In Atlanta, Mrs. Althea Hunter, Charlayne's mother, confirmed her daughter was married but gave no details.

WOULD BAR MARTELLI

London—(UPI)—Britain announced Monday night it has asked the European Atomic Agency not to renew the employment of Italian scientist Dr. Giuseppe Martelli, who was tried and found innocent of charges of preparing to spy for Russia.



BULL EXPERIMENT—Gene Brown, (far right), shows off his bull calves. The experiment being conducted in Josephine county indicates bulls gain more rapidly than steers for the meat market.

Wheat Program Deadline Nearing

Time is short for winter wheat producers to consider how their wheat plantings may affect their participation in the 1964 feed grain program, Chairman Albert Straus of the Jackson County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation (County) committee, reminded growers today.

The chairman said that many wheat farmers in the county are also feed grain producers and as a result are eligible to participate in the 1964 feed grain program by diverting feed grain acreage out of production.

He noted the drop in 1964 wheat prices as reflected by the present wheat futures market, currently, the judgment of the market is a July 1964 Kansas City wheat futures price of around \$1.55 per bushel. This price, adjusted to a farm level, reflects a wheat price of about \$1.25 to \$1.30 per bushel.

Under Heavy Pressure
A 1964 crop in excess of current disappearance of about 1.3 billion bushels for domestic and export use will undoubtedly put heavy downward pressure on wheat prices, probably forcing prices down to a feed price level as the supply seeks a consumption outlet.

Chairman Straus pointed out that the 1964 feed grain program has been designed to reduce possible expansion of overall grain acreage. The program provides an effective guide for farmers to follow in keeping their overall crop acreages in 1964 reasonably in line with expected needs.

Range Growth Aided by Moth

Corvallis — Management plans are needed to take full advantage of the possibilities for range improvement being offered by the sagebrush defoliating moth now devastating sage throughout much of Eastern Oregon, reports Dillard Gates, Oregon State university extension range management specialist.

The moth (Aroga websteri) is working on an estimated six to seven million acres of sagebrush rangeland. Areas badly infested in 1962 show evidence of an almost complete kill of sage, but it is still too early to determine the final effects, Gates said. Older, stagnated sage stands appear to be the most vulnerable.

However, he cautions, range owners, managers and users need to be ready to act to take full advantage of the situation, which is much like having large areas of the range chemically treated to kill sagebrush.

Gates urges that where sage has been killed, range managers take a serious look at the possibilities of seeding the area with adapted forage species, primarily crested wheatgrass.

SLAUGHTER PLANTS

Salem — Slaughter plants coming under the Oregon Department of Agriculture's meat inspection program handled more animals during the second quarter of 1963 than during either the first quarter of 1963 or the second quarter of 1962.

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