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First Box Factory in Klamath Falls
Was Established by the California
Fruit Canners Association in 1906

Plant was sold to Colonel Robert A. Johnson in July, 1912 and was operated as the Klamath Manufacturing Company — Name was changed to the Klamath Lumber and Box Company in 1920 — Now employs 150 local people cutting an average of 20-million board feet of lumber annually.

By R. KENNETH EVANS

The Klamath Lumber and Box Company, employing some 150 local people and, cutting an average of 20-million board feet of rough lumber, annually, is the outgrowth of the first box factory established in Klamath Falls. The California Fruit Canners Association came into the Klamath Falls region in 1906 and, built a small plant for the manufacture of box shook. These were transported by wagon to Pokegama and shipped over a narrow gauge railroad to connect with the Southern Pacific near Montague. When rail service was established in 1910 the box shook from this plant was shipped directly by rail. The California Fruit Canners Association was the fore-runner of the California Packing Corporation, processing the Del Monte brand of fruits and vegetables.

This small box shook manufacturing plant was operated by the California Fruit Canners Association for some six years, when it was sold to Colonel Robert A. Johnson, in July, 1912. These were the days when the forest industry was operated under rather trying circumstances. Ponderosa pine was the type of trees that were used for the manufacture of box shook. While they grew profusely in the Klamath Falls region the logs were hard to get out of the woods, and the machinery for manufacturing the box shook was, more or less, primitive. However, by 1916, Colonel Robert A. Johnson, with foresight and ingenuity, established a sawmill on the site of the box-factory, and in addition to the cutting of box shook rough lumber was produced.

When the first world war came into existence Colonel Robert A. Johnson was called and assigned as Colonel with the Twentieth Engineers of the U.S. Army. He served in this capacity until the end of the war, and passed away in 1920.

PLANT SOLD TO THE EARL FRUIT COMPANY

The Klamath Manufacturing Company plant and equipment was sold by the Johnson estate to the Earl Fruit Company and it was operated for the manufacture of box shook and rough lumber. The Earl Fruit Company was later merged with the DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation. The Klamath Lumber and Box company was incorporated and, the plant has operated under this management and ownership since that time. For almost a quarter-of-a-century it has been contributing, substantially, to the development of the Klamath Basin, manufacturing Ponderosa pine lumber and sawed wooden boxes.

Many major improvements in the equipment have been made, year after year, in keeping with the growth and expansion of the Klamath Lumber and Box Company. A new planer was installed in the box factory. The original steam-powered bandsaw mill has been converted into an electrically operated sawmill with modern and up-to-date sawmill machinery. A dry kiln was built and is operated on the Moore system of removing moisture from the rough cut pine lumber.

The rough cut pine lumber, turned out in the sawmill, will average 20-million board feet annually. The necessary volume of lumber is allocated for the manufacture of the sawed box shook. The upper grades are kiln dried.

The Klamath Lumber and Box Company's relative source of supply is from the Klamath Indian Reservation.

G. A. Krause, president of the Klamath Lumber and Box Company has been identified with the operation of this plant since 1913 and has been a factor in its growth, advancement and expansion. H. E. Getz is secretary and R. A. Cantrell is assistant secretary. R. A. Cantrell is the son of R. E. Cantrell who was one of the first lumbermen in this region to install a modern sawmill.

G. A. Krause came into the Pacific Northwest from Wisconsin and has been closely associated with the forest industries for 43 years and all that time has been located in the Klamath Falls region.

Since the establishment of the first box factory by the California Fruit Canners Association in 1906

and its development, today, into one of the major forest industry operations, Klamath County has also seen its timber industry rapidly expanded. The construction of the Natron cut-off of the Southern Pacific railroad has stimulated large sawmill operations since the 1920's and, out of that expansion has grown the Klamath Lumber and Box Company.

Lumber production has increased annually, since that time, reaching a peak in 1942 with a production of 856 million board feet. At the end of the war production had dropped, in the face of active demand and favorable prices, and in 1945 annual production in the county was only 490-million board feet.

This reduction of lumber production, however, will not effect the stable operation of the Klamath Lumber and Box Company because of its purpose viz., supplying box shook for fruit packing as its major industrial structure. It is anticipated, however, that the future production of lumber in the Klamath Basin will average approximately 250-million board feet, annually, under the sustained yield and proper forest management plan which is, quite generally, being set-up in the coast states. Of this amount it is, also anticipated that the Klamath Lumber and Box Company will contribute its normal 20-million board feet to this over-all amount, on a permanent annual operation basis.

The 150 people employed by the Klamath Lumber and Box Company are all high class, skillful, loyal and industrious workers. Manufacturing products of a basic character and this type of personnel connected with it, has, no doubt, been largely responsible for the success, over the years, of this industrial operation. Many of the workers in this plant are home owners, permanent residents and take pride in their job.

In summary, progressive management, trained and loyal workers coupled with basic products such as are manufactured by the Klamath Lumber and Box Company, and recognition of the rights of both workers and management are some of the contributing factors to the successful operation of industry, as a whole, in the Klamath Basin region, such as the Klamath Lumber and Box Company.

(Continued from opp. ps.)

the Tulelake region. Four specially designed trucks are used to make the route trips regularly, each in charge of a salesman-driver. These routes reach more than 400 retail outlets that are never left without a generous supply of Pepsi-Cola, Nesbitt's Orange, Squirt, Hires Root Beer and Wonderland's Flavors. Special trips are made just preceding any holiday, such as Memorial Day, Fourth of July, etc., when the demand is greatest.

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Klamath Lumber and Box Company