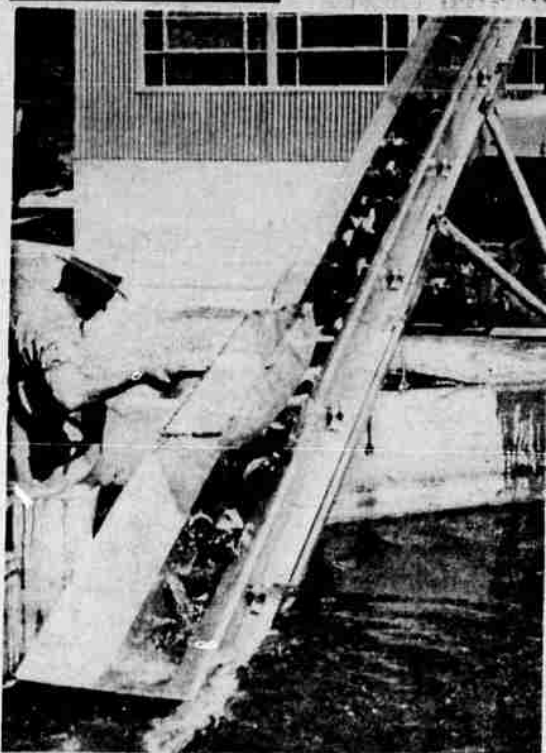




ROBERT MURRAY is shown here loading legal size trout for planting in California's fishing streams.

Trout Hatchery In Mount Shasta Is Big Tourist Attraction In Summer

By J. O. McKINNEY

MOUNT SHASTA—Plans being advanced by Mount Shasta business interests to hold tourists through added attractions are but a repeat performance of what occurred here 83 years ago. It worked then. Mount Shastans believe it is still a good plan.

It was on March 14, 1877, that a news item in the Yreka Journal told of J. H. Sisson's building a trout rearing pond on waters he had secured. This was to provide better fishing so guests would remain longer in his hotel. The water supply he had procured was from Big Spring, one of the sources of the Sacramento River. These waters are still used for that purpose. There has been but one change in ownership since the day the plan was adopted. California bought the land 11 years later, and operates the plant today.

While the original trout hatchery was for purely local improvement, the present hatchery has a wider field. Fish reared there, and eggs hatched in Big Spring waters, go into other parts of the state, the nation, and to other countries of the world. More than 3,500,000 trout are raised there annually; and more than 12,000,000 fish eggs are produced on the 30-acre tract. California-produced rainbows are now being taken in trout waters everywhere fishing is a sport.

This is a far cry from the fish first reared to stock the Sacramento, the McCloud, the Shasta, and the many local lakes where Sisson's hotel guests went to fish.

Just as the sphere of activities has advanced, so have methods of fish propagation. Today there are many thousands of brood trout developed through selective mating. Rainbow trout originally spawned only during

spring months. There is now at the hatchery a strain of rainbows that spawn during fall, and winter months. This is done to create a sustained hatching season instead of having so many come at one time.

Another scientific advancement is shipping of brood trout to lower altitudes during the fall. Here they winter in a mild climate, develop eggs early, then are brought back to the chill waters of Mount Shasta to be spawned, and have their progeny developed in the more healthful climate where fighting comes natural.

Feeding fish is another field in which advancement has been made. The Yreka Journal told of the first fish food being milk and eggs. Today's trout foods are like baby formulas. Minerals, vitamins, carbohydrates, proteins, and fiber elements are introduced with consideration given to age and other factors involved.

Not all of Sisson's ideas have worked as well as his trout farm. He also introduced whitefish, graylings, and even German carp. No whitefish, nor graylings, are found in the area; and no carp would be tolerated in the entire region.

But better fishing is not the entire attraction of this big fish farm. It is a tourist attraction in itself. Before the advent of the Ski Bowl, it was the greatest single tourist attraction in Siskiyou County. More than 50,000 visitors are shown through the place each year.

Not all the visitors are welcome. Every few months some of the big brood fish are seen to be trailing a length of leader material from the mouth, with a hook fast to its jaw. Kingfisher birds, too, are unwelcome; as are minks, snakes and other predators. But as with all crops, there are enemies that attack.

One of the star attractions to this plant for 19 years was a big sturgeon. Kept in a small circular pool, it was admired by many thousands of people each year. In 1939, a vandal drove a knife into its body. Surgery was performed but the big fish lived only a short time after the attack. It is buried on the hatchery grounds.

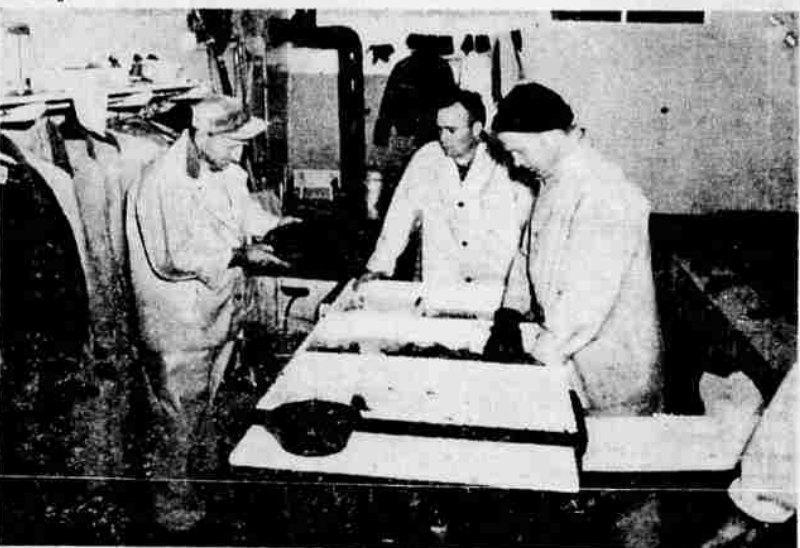
J. H. Sissons had a town named for him. That name is now but a memory. But his work in developing the hatchery lives and thrives, with promise that it will endure forever.



THE MOUNT SHASTA HATCHERY grounds are located in a setting of splendid scenery. The hatchery draws more than 50,000 visitors every year.



EGGS ARE STRIPPED FROM A FISH by Roy Commozzi as James Neptune does the holding.



SPAWNING OPERATIONS are a crucial point and are carried out by experienced personnel. From left to right are Thomas Driml, Clyde McQuoid and James Neptune.



TAKING TROUT from a holding pool to be transferred to another pool for test feeding is a wet job.

THE COVER

Loren P. Hoover was hard at work on the spring field work when Herald and News Photographer Wes Guderian happened by the Bill Cunningham ranch out Olene way not long ago. The resultant photo made a timely cover for this week's magazine.

— Photos by McKinney