

We're Celebrating Our
30th

ANNIVERSARY

Peach Ridge Fruit Growers Association

Pioneer Orchardist of Kent County

The first peach orchard on the Coles Able Bloomer farm was six acres set in 1877. In 1881 a large orchard was finished. In 1868 Gilbert Bettes came from Canada and bought the farm later operated by his granddaughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Avery Ebers. The first peach orchard on this place was 26 acres set out in 1881. In 1888 he had a bumper crop of 8,000 bushels. People came from



GILBERT BETTES

miles around for peaches. At one time there were 100 rigs on the farm for peaches. In 1889 Charles Harrison (Harry) Bettes bought part of the farm of his father and in a very few years was raising plums, pears, grapes, cherries, pears and apples.

INDIANS ONCE CONGREGATED ON KLENK FARM

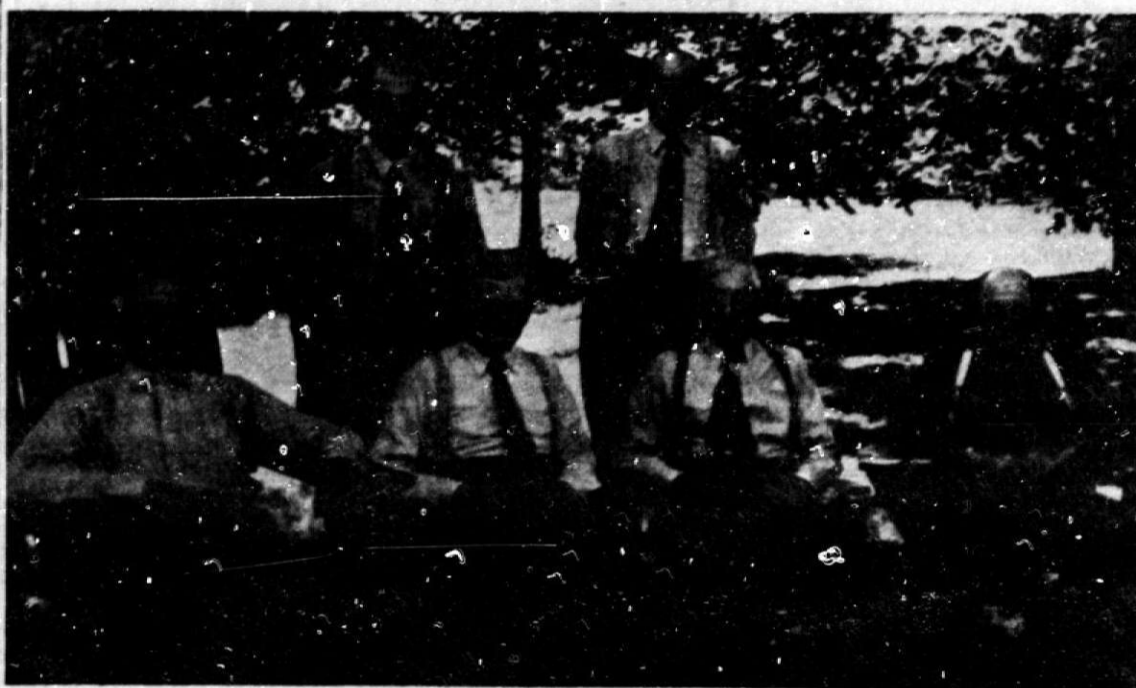
On the Martin L. Klenk & Son farm is the wonder of the age as far as the "Ridge" is concerned. This land, known by all as the Spring Valley Farm, so-called after the spring on the premises used by the Indians long before the white men ever set foot on this soil.

Mr. Hanna, who originally owned the farm, had the spring piped with 8-foot white ash logs bored in the center to act as a pipe. This water system was used until some years after Gottlieb, grandfather of the present owner, had it furnished with regular piping.

Since then the well has been walled and again reequipped. This well furnishes an adequate supply of water for spraying and watering of stock, the supply being unlimited.

That Indians made this spot about the well much frequented, is evidenced by the numerous relics of Indian lore and flints that have been found from time to time.

Organized In 1928: Pioneer Fruit Growers Of The Peach Ridge District: Men Of Vision!



FRANK PEASE
HENRY A. SCHAEFER

HENRY KRAFT
C. E. GILSON

DAN ARMOCK
E. FIELD

The Inspiration Of Pioneers

By H. J. KURTZ, Editor

The Sentinel-Leader this week is released in the form of a souvenir edition, which commemorates the agricultural achievements of the Peach Ridge fruit district and is especially dedicated to the pioneer orchardists of that area, who possessed the foresight and courage to follow a vision, which eventually carried them far beyond their fondest expectations in the cultivation of peaches and apples.

In gathering material concerning their efforts it was not difficult to visualize the obstacles they were obliged to surmount, for they were carrying out new ideas in orcharding then unknown by their neighbors and friends. There must have been some in those days, who thought perhaps because it had

never been done before, it just couldn't be done!

When Henry A. Schaefer first began spraying his apple trees with a broom and Frank Pease lined his warehouse with sawdust, we are inclined to believe that these advanced ideas were ridiculed by those who viewed their actions with considerable suspicion. However, brave souls are never dismayed! These and other pioneers of equal faith and courage, continued their forward march until today the abundant crop from highly cultivated orchards stands as a monument of their undaunted vision.

The sons of these pioneers continue to carry on, completely sold on the idea of modern, electrical, air-conditioned storages and rural electrification in general as an aid

to agriculture. They grade, pack and label their farm products, and with the aid of science and learning are establishing new frontiers in the cultivation of fruit, which today demands the best efforts of men of vision.

To the fruit growers of the "Ridge" and the Casnovia Fruit Belt whose foresight and toil have brought about such a banner crop this season, the Sentinel-Leader expresses its gratitude. These growers deserve credit for aiding in the prosperity of our county. Their quality products will spread fame and renown of this district throughout the nation. An abundant crop means security. It means employment and a livelihood for many of our people. It means increased trading facilities for us all.

Fruit Growers Take Great Pride In Their Homes

In making the rounds of the "Peach Ridge" district, one is much impressed with the beautiful modernized houses and farm buildings everywhere. It goes to show that as much beauty can be produced in the rural districts as may be found on the best residential avenues and boulevards in the city.

With the advent of rural electrification in these districts, every agriculturist took advantage of this modern and labor-saving opportunity and it is no unusual sight to see electric gloves, refrigerators, washing machines, hot water heaters

and other devices in use in these homes a spirit of desired progress so evident among these farm people.

Electricity is also in use in the other buildings on the farm, electric power being utilized for operating machinery used in the process of farming of every nature. All buildings are well lighted, wired in the most modern methods. This particular advantage has been one of the greatest aids in the home work of the farm.

We cannot fail to mention the beautiful landscaped yards to be found about the houses. Lawns are well kept and the driveways leading from the highways into the farm home yards, bordered by evergreens, shrubbery, etc., prove a sight one cannot forget. All yards also have beautiful flower spots dotted here and there.

Henry Kraft Erected First Modern Fruit Storage Plant in '14

In 1890 Henry Kraft bought 170 acres of land on the "Ridge." At that time there was an almost barren farm with but an old barn on the premises. Mr. Kraft, seeing the cold storage plants were taking the profit the orchardists should have, erected the first storage plant in the "Peach Ridge" in 1914. Friends and buyers warned him that he was moving a "white elephant" onto his farm. Having faith in his thought he brushed aside all the jeers and proved to himself and "doubting Thomases" that he had solved one of the orchardist's worries.

In 1933 he built a second storage plant, a duplicate of the original unit. Orchardists found the Kraft experiment to be a proven success and soon one after another followed suit. Some of the "Peach Ridgers" wrote to the state college for a plan for storage building and they were referred to a neighbor, Mr. Kraft, for an ideal set-up. And many storage plants are now dotting the area built as first designed and erected by Mr. Kraft.

Mr. Kraft enjoyed relating the difficulties experienced in the "horse and buggy" and early days in getting the apples to the nearest railroad station for shipping. Mr. Kraft was not interested in seeing the horses "back on the farm." He said they might be all right for the kids, but when it comes to work on the farm there is nothing like the tractor and in getting orchard products to the markets there is no excuse for replacing the truck.

When his son, George, was ready to marry his father built another modern house on the farm, just west of the old family home and took his son into the orchard business with him and the place was known as Henry Kraft & Son orchards. Ten acres are devoted to peaches and sixty acres are in apple orchards. Some other fruits are also raised on a much smaller scale.

Years Ago Apples Were Shipped From Gooding Corners

One of the landmarks of the district, which withstood the ravages of storm and fire, is the general store building at Gooding Corners, at one time a lively spot of varied business enterprises, when the hamlet of Lisbon, now a ghost town, was also a hustling little village.

In 1899 John M. Kraft bought the general store at Gooding and for forty years had operated the business, later taking his son, Roland, into the business as a partner. Several years ago a disastrous fire hit the corners and swept everything in its path, save the general store, which today stands alone as a reminder of bygone days.

Mr. Kraft for many years had a large warehouse at the Gooding Corners and handled many thousands of bushels of apples.

APPLE TREE, 78 YEARS OLD, DESTROYED BY WIND

The weather and wind destroyed probably one of the oldest trees in this region a few years ago. This tree was planted 78 years ago on the C. E. Gilson farm and measured 2 1/2 feet in diameter, and in its last year had a good crop of apples. Mr. Gilson, who is one of the pioneers of the "Ridge", says he well remembers the folks talking over the results and effects of the Civil war.

TOP LEADERS OF THE PEACH RIDGE DISTRICT



WILSON KLENK McKINNEY DIETRICH SCHAEFER

Among past and present leaders who have had a hand in directing the destiny of Peach Ridge Fruit district are the men shown above. At the left is the late Otto Klenk, who had given years toward the expansion of this rapidly growing

and profitable area. Headquarters of the association are at the neighborhood gas station on Fruit Ridge Ave., at the intersection of Ten Mile Road, operated by Mr. McKinney, who still serves as the secretary of the organization.

FIRST EXTENSION MEETING TO DISCUSS USE OF ELECTRICITY IN AGRICULTURE WAS HELD AT BALLARDS CORNERS
By K. K. Vining

The past forty years have seen a marked change in the type of agriculture in the west side of Kent County bordering Ottawa and extending from Grand River in Walker township, to the middle of Tyrone Township.

In this period the agriculture has changed from a grain, dairy and livestock farm enterprise to

a quite predominating one of fruit. This area has become known quite extensively as the Peach Ridge section centering where Fruit Ridge and Ballards Corner road cross.

Why is this a good fruit section? For one thing the soil is quite uniform type, a clay loam, known to the soil specialist as Isabella Clay

NEW AND MODERN EQUIPMENT HAS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN SUCCESSFUL ORCHARDING



(1) The horse-drawn rig used in spraying as far back as 1917 is shown in this picture which was taken on the Henry Kraft farm. (2) The new and modern motor-equipped sprayer soon followed. This scene was taken on the Kraft farm in 1939. (3) Another 1917 picture shows horse-drawn vehicles hauling apples to the Englishville station during the winter months. Drivers are Henry Kraft, Philip Schwartz, George Unior and George Kraft.

Loam. Along with this soil condition, topography is rolling giving good soil and air drainage.

Apples and peaches do well on this land along with grain and cultivated crops. Other areas in Kent County have peach histories. The writer can remember as a youngster, of peaches coming from Rockford and from Lowell but these areas are not peach sections any more.

In the Peach Ridge section as in other fruit sections of this county the growers are not only growing just peaches but we find apples with the peaches and the apples planted are in variety of kinds.

Kent County fruit men have always been pointed for the latest in spray and cultural practices to make their products the best. Fruit meetings are always well attended. They are always looking for the best practice to make the best product.

Built Power Line

In the Peach Ridge section was held the first extension meeting in Michigan to discuss the use of electricity in agriculture. This was at the Ballard Corner Church in 1929. Also in this neighborhood was the first effort by a group of farmers to build a rural power line in co-operation with the utility and today we dare say there isn't a home in this area that isn't served by electricity.

Fruit Ridge is always a favorite drive in blossom time and in fact any time of the year and with the paving of this road will find increased traffic.

The first air cooled storage in this section, and we believe in Michigan, was built on the Henry Kraft farm in Alpine township. Since then in Kent and neighboring counties there have been built many air cooled storages. Improvements have been made but the principles in the Kraft storage built 40 years ago are still used and good.

In this forty year period county roads have developed and with them the motor truck. Today very few cars of fruit move from Kent County, the greatest bulk going by motor truck, either by the farmer himself, or the trucker who comes in to buy fruit. Along with this road development has brought the industrial centers of Michigan closer to the Kent County fruit farm.

The Grand Rapids market is close for the Peach Ridge fruit man and he uses it. Incidentally, it was a group of Kent County fruit men who brought pressure to bear on city authorities to remodel and rebuild the wholesale market in Grand Rapids.

LISBON—1900

A village of 200 population, on the dividing line between the townships of Chester, in Ottawa County and Sparta, in Kent of Grand Rapids and five miles west of Sparta station, on the Grand Rapids, Newaygo and Lake Shore Railroad, its shipping point. It is situated in an agricultural district. Lisbon has triweekly mail.

PEACH BETTY

Remove the crust from slices of soft bread and pick in tiny bits (crumbs). There should be 3 cups. Add 1/2 cup melted butter to crumbs and toss with a fork until well blended. Have ready 3 cups peeled and thinly sliced fresh peaches. Put a layer in a buttered pudding dish, cover with a layer of peaches, sprinkle with sugar and a grating of orange or lemon peel, continue alternate layers until crumbs and peaches are used. Cover dish and bake one hour. Remove cover the last 1/2 hour that crumbs may brown richly. Serve with Hard Sauce or sweeten cream flavoring with nutmeg.

PUDDING

Mix and sift 2 cups pastry flour, 4 teaspoons baking powder, 1/2 teaspoon salt. With the tips of fingers, rub in 2 tablespoons butter, add gradually 3/4 cup rich milk, mixing it in with a knife. Pare and thinly slice 6 fresh peaches, arrange them in a buttered melon mould, sprinkle with 2 tablespoons sugar mixed with 1/4 teaspoon each salt and mace. Spread the soft dough over peaches, adjust cover buttered on the inside and steam 1 1/2 hours. Serve with foamy sauce.



Harvest Time Sales

Jonathan apples never looked finer. Large in size, good color, delicious flavor and a record-breaking crop. Shown above, are Orville Schwartz (left) and his father, Phil Schwartz, about to deliver a truck load of Jonathans to Grand Rapids.

The Peach Ridge area boasts the world's most concentrated area of grower-owned cold storages. However, a large volume of the

fruit produced in the area moves to market at picking time from farms which do not have cold storage facilities.

Buyers find it convenient and efficient to deal with one area beginning at harvest time and continuing through the entire apple deal which ends in late June. This area feature has put this fruit section in an enviable position in the eyes of many buyers.

HENRY A. SCHAEFER, PIONEER APPLE ORCHARDIST, PLANTED APPLE TREES ON HIS FARM 70 YEARS AGO AND SPRAYED THE TREES WITH BROOMS; SONS ARNOLD AND WILL HAVE HELPED DEVELOP A BIG BUSINESS

On the Henry A. Schaefer farm, 40 acres of land on which Mr. Schaefer and his twin brother were born, were purchased by their parents in 1854 upon their arrival in "Uncle Sam's" domain from Germany. The parents bought the land for the "huge" price of \$50 for the 40 acres.

At the age of 18 years, the twins had a strong desire to purchase 40 acres near their parents' place. This required an investment of \$2,200. Mr. Schaefer's father sold some stock, grain, etc., to the amount of \$200. This constituted the down payment. The two boys paid for this 40 in six years, selling out for \$2,600 in 1883, and bought the present farm, that was occupied by Mr. Schaefer, for \$7,500. Eight years later they had this farm clear. He then bought out his brother's share.

In 1908 Mr. Schaefer again bought 60 acres across from his home and in 1914 bought another 60 acres for his sons. In 1914 Mr. Schaefer retired, turning over his accumulated farm and orchard holdings to his sons, William and Arnold.



A Smorasbord Display



Shown above are Mrs. Ella Heft (left) and Mrs. Christine Johnson admiring one of the numerous displays of baked goods prepared with apples, an annual Smorasbord feature.