

Tom Nelson  
Economic Development Manager  
City of Sherwood Oregon  
22560 SW Pine Street  
Sherwood, Oregon 97140

November 10, 2009

Ref: Portland Canning Co.

Thank you for returning my call. We have waited a long time for development of this property and would like to see proper recognition. Portland Canning was the life blood of this community and the surrounding area as you can see by the news articles that I have enclosed. Not just the people employed here but the freight lines, suppliers, college students and farmers were affected by the closure. Closure was due primarily to the U.S.D.A requiring stainless equipment where food was processed and non-porous materials overhead and on floors which would have been cost prohibitive. June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1972 was a very sad day when I locked the doors for the last time and turned the keys over to the bank. We were like a big family.

Some of the people we would like recognized in naming streets, buildings and the square are Lasselle, Swenson, Carson, McCann, Courtney, Elton and Scheller. Other names to use could include: cherry, strawberry, cane-berry, Marion-berry, blue lake green bean, or just green bean as well as plum, sauerkraut, and onion.

We have a DVD of the construction of the last building standing which is now the machine shop. Most of our pictures and scrap books have been given to The Sherwood Historical Society.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Concerned Citizens,

Don and Yvonne Scheller

*Exhibit H*



## **The Cannery That Supported A Community**

**by Courtney Lasselle**

The cannery was originally started in Sherwood by the Graves Canning Company in the mid-nineteen twenties. It was not operating in 1928 as the Graves Canning Co. because it had run into financial difficulties.

My father, S.A. Lasselle, had been in the dried fruit business for a number of years and the market for dried plums or prunes was slowly becoming less and less. This left a large supply of fresh plums with no market. Through food brokers who had handled sales for him he learned that there was a market for canned purple plums.

My father learned that the cannery in Sherwood would not be operating in 1928, so he made arrangements to rent it and made a small pack of 25,000 cases of plums.

Inasmuch as he was new in the canning business, and had no sales contracts with distributors he had a hard time selling the pack. He did not move this inventory until 1929, and then at a much reduced price as the depression was on. Consequently, there was no pack in 1929.

In 1930 the Portland Canning Co. was incorporated and sales were contracted for a pack of about 50,000 cases of plums. This pack of plums grew until in the late 1930s Portland Canning Company canned 300,000 cases of plums. Through the 1930s other products were packed. Frozen berries were added in the mid-1930s. Canned green beans and wax beans, brined cherries, sauerkraut, and boiler onions were added to the pack in the following years. The pack grew until the plant was packing 10,000 to 12,000 tons of new products.

As the pack grew the number of employees grew. At the start less than 100 people were employed for a short time, a month or so. Later on as the pack increased more help was needed. During the packing season the plant ran 3 shifts per day and at times had as many as 300 employees. To get this many people it was necessary to employ a number of high school and college students. As this was a seasonal or temporary job, many of these employees returned year after year.

In later years as more labor-saving equipment became available not as much help was needed, however the plant did give employment to many students and people who were looking for temporary employment.

# Reunions

## Portland Canning closes doors *Nov 22-71*

Portland Canning Company closed its doors in what looks like a permanent move on November 22. Although spokesmen for the company have not been available for comment, the surprise move looks to be final action.

Persons who've been employed at the cannery, some as long as 26 or more years, said they had no warning before the Monday preceding Thanksgiving that they would be without jobs. At 4:30 that afternoon they were given notice not to report back to the job and some were given indications they would be called back to work later if needed. The canning company that employed 30 persons full time, 26 persons part time, and hundreds of persons seasonally was purchased some months ago by Mission Pac of Roseburg.

The Portland Canning Company Reunion Committee would like to invite all former employees, friends and neighbors to a celebration honoring Court

and Barb Laselle on July 15 on the Sherwood Intermediate School front lawn. Refreshments will be served from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and a display of old pictures and artifacts from the cannery will be available for all to see and enjoy.

The cannery was a major source of income in Sherwood from its beginning in 1918 as the Graves Cannery to the final closing in 1972. Various companies operated the cannery under the names of the Sherwood Canning Co., Jory Packing, Butler Canning, Lasselle Canning Co. and finally the Portland Canning Company. People are invited to come share their memories of the cannery.

For information or questions, call Yvonne Scheller, 625-6570, or Cora Harper 625-6204.

## PRESS RELEASE

## REUNIONS OR SPECIAL EVENTS

1997

Contact: Yvonne Scheller  
503-625-6570

The Portland Canning Co. Reunion Committee would like to invite all former employees, farmers, suppliers, friends and neighbors to a celebration honoring Courtney and Barbara Lasselle on July 20 on the lawn at Sherwood Intermediate School. Refreshments will be served from 10: AM to 2:PM and a display of old pictures and memorabilia from the cannery will be available for all to see and enjoy. This is in conjunction with the annual Robin Hood Festival activities.

The cannery was a major source of income in Sherwood from its beginning in 1918 as the Graves Cannery to the final closing in 1972. Various companies operated the cannery under the names of the Sherwood Canning Co, Jory Packing, Butler Canning, Lasselle Canning Co., and finally Portland Canning Co. They processed a variety of caneberries, strawberries, beans, Italian prunes, sauerkraut, cherries and onions. The cannery employed 50 people year around and more than 400 workers in the summer canning season. Come and share your memories and an important part of Sherwood history with the former owners.

For information or questions call Yvonne Scheller @ 625-6570, Mary Wert @ 639 6459, or Cora Harper @ 625-6204.