

The Squire Dingee Pickle Factory

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About 1909, Squire Dingee induced farmers to grow cucumbers for pickling. Most farmers were quite skeptical and would plant only from one to ten acres of cucumbers, which proved to be quite enough

Pickle picking was a back-breaking task. You spent the day bent over reaching for the pickles and carrying your bushel basket to the sorting area where it was credited. There, the pickles were sorted from midgets to dill size. The growers were paid according to the grade. Often when growers delivered, he would be told that he had delivered too many of the wrong size for that day as the vats were overfilled and they would have to be held over for the day when they would be filling another vat.

The vats were about five feet deep and ten feet across, filled with brine made of water, spices, and vinegar. The attendant would dump in the baskets of cukes, level them with a rake and then get in with rubber boots and tramp them down. Then to the surprise and disappointment of the farmers, they were suddenly told to bring in no more pickles—the vats were filled and they were supplied for the season. Thus would end the income for the farmers and young people who had been breaking their backs to gain a little pocket money, a new bicycle, or much-desired new clothes.

After school start, some of the kids would often go down to select a nice dill to go along with the sack lunch we had brought from home. This plant closed up in about three years.