

More than a Mill Town: Prunes Helped Early Camas to Prosper

Though the mill was the #1 industry in early Camas, agriculture was another important part of the growth of our city. The prune industry was especially lucrative and the prosperity of the farmers was infused back into the local economy, making prunes a big part of why Camas did so well as a new town!



The first day of prune season, 1907 Washougal, Washington. Pictured are shakers (the men holding poles), pickers, and the owner of the prune orchard, Frank Russell, sitting in his car. The plums were shaken off the trees and then picked up, packed into 50 pound boxes, and then taken to be dried. *Courtesy of the Camas-Washougal Historical Society*



By 1900, more than 435,000 Italian plum trees were producing fruit in Clark County which was then considered the prune capital of the world. "Prune Hill" in Camas was the perfect growing area and there were 7 dryers in this area alone.