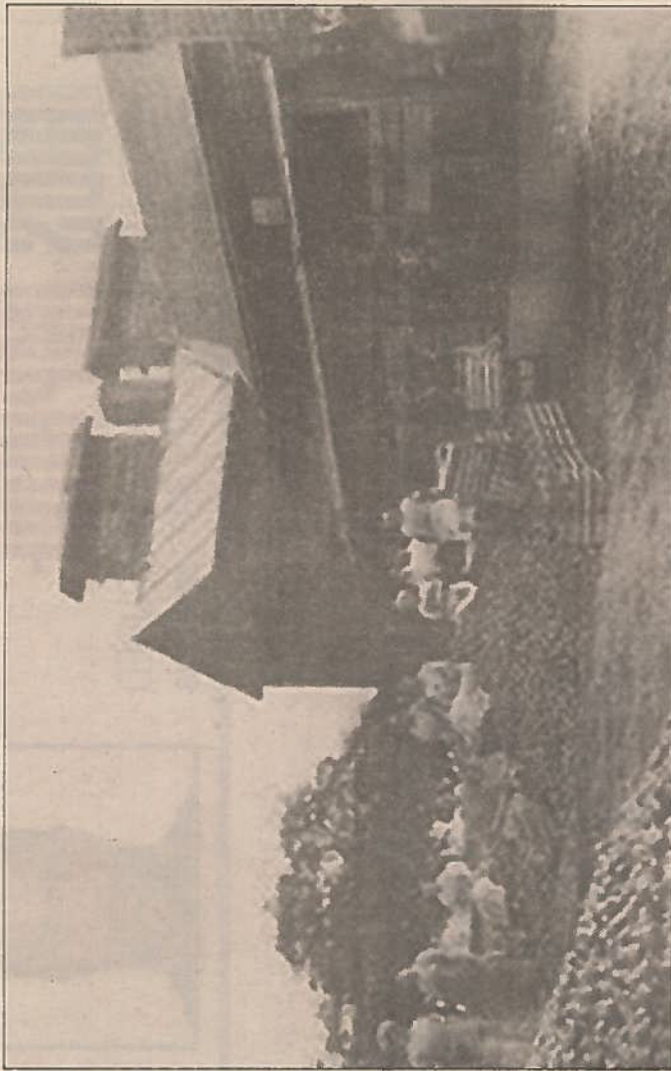


2-13-07



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ashwood Dry House

BY C. W. LATTIN

This photo post card of the Ashwood Dry House was made just 100 years ago. It shows piles of apples around, which are posed 10 women and a girl. In the background by bins at the dry house are five men.

Dry houses like this were totally utilitarian structures in nature, usually two stories in height. With this building we can see two large ventilators and a chimney.

Dry houses, or evaporators as they were often called, produced dry apples and other fruits during the harvest season each fall.

The 1903 Orleans County Directory lists 46 such businesses in the county at that time. By the early 20th century cold storages replaced this former method of preservation of fruit.

The operator of a dry house would typically hire a number of women to come in and peel and slice apples which were

placed on drying racks that revolved over a heat source. Hence in our plate, we see 10 women as the peeling and slicing crew.

The chimney indicates the heat source and the ventilators were necessary to draw the heat up through the drying racks. Sulfur was used in the drying process to maintain whiteness in the dried apples.

Men in this picture were probably doing the many tasks such as bagging the finished product and stoking the fire.