

SUGAR MILL PAGE

The Ohio Sugar Company began Ottawa sugar production in 1912. The company operated the plant during 1913 and 1914 but remained idle the following two years. Operations were then reorganized under new President John Pfeiler and the company began continuous operation.

Ottawa's sugar beet factory was once considered one of the world's most modern. The plant's slicing capacity rose to 100 tons per day as beets were brought to the plant and stored in large outside piles until processing. From 1913 the 1920's farmers could bring horse drawn wagon loads of beets to railheads such as Columbus Grove for transport to the Ottawa plant.

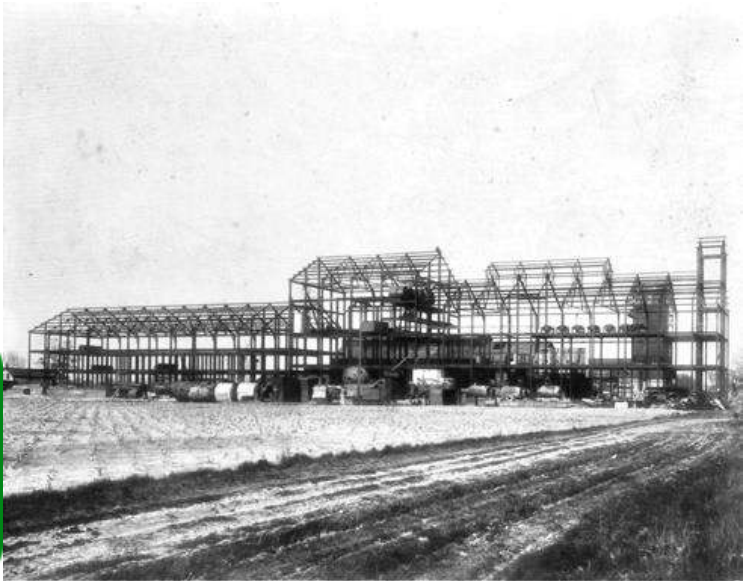
Beets were processed through slicers and a vating procedure which produced refined sugar sold as well as the known brand of "Sweet More". By products such as pulp were also processed and sold as feed supplements. The bagged pulp was loaded on railcars for shipment to other factories or for direct sale.

Ottawa's sugar beet factory was also one of the first In the United States to bring in raw cane sugar for processing. Thousands of tons of raw cane sugar were shipped from southern ports through the St. Lawrence Seaway to Detroit or Toledo and then by rail to Ottawa for reprocessing. The plant could operate longer in the year by shipping in the southern raw cane sugar, maintaining constant employment for its workers.

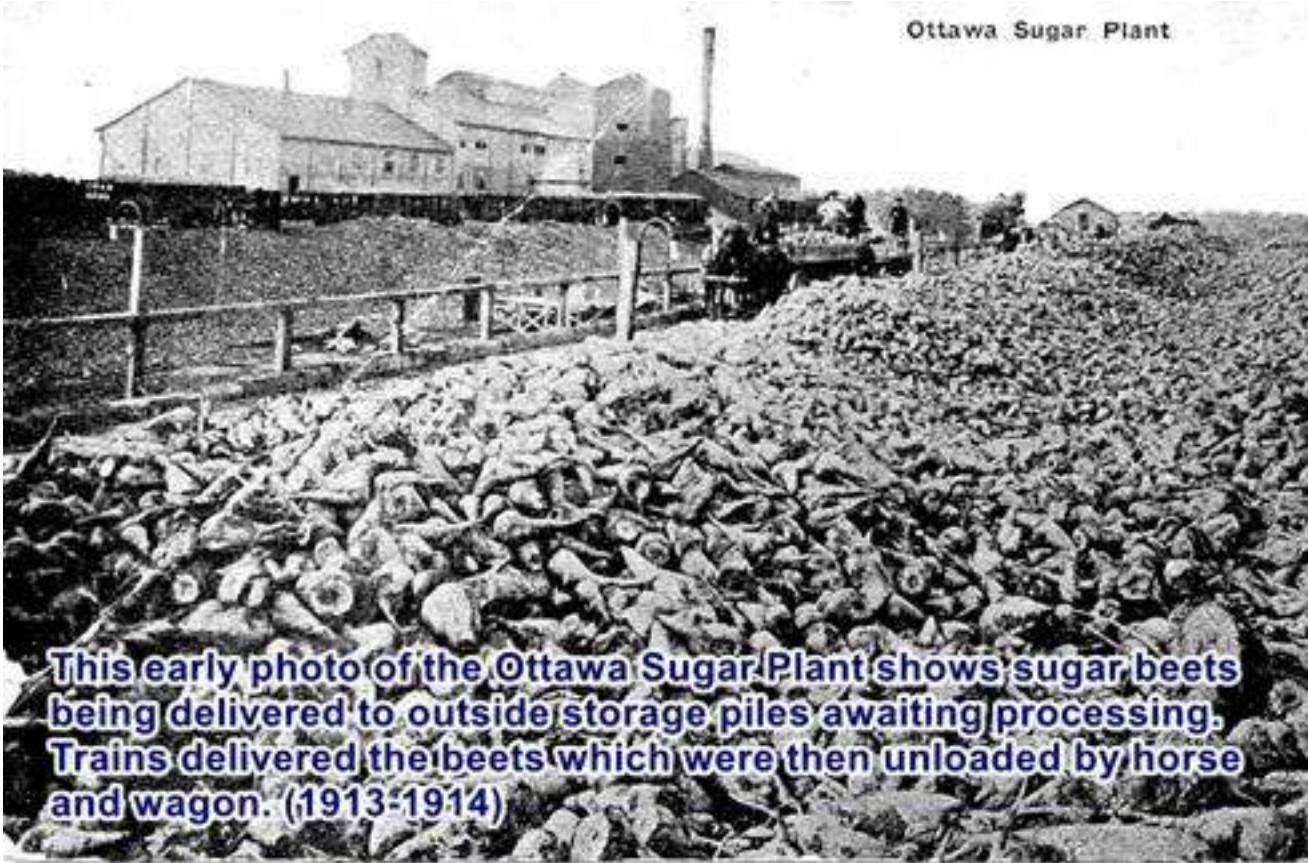
The Ottawa plant contracts with some 1200 local farmers for beets to be grown and shipped during early operating years. The beets required intensive hand labor in blocking and thinning which was often done by farmers and in later years by migrant laborers. 400 additional workers other than the farmers were then employed in the field work of caring for the beets. Sugar beets were usually ready for harvest at the beginning of October. The Ohio Sugar Company employed 100 men to transport the beets to the long piles waiting processing at the plant. The three-month slicing season employed some additional two hundred workers.

Sugar beet production became a profitable way to supplement farm income prior to the 1930's depression. The sugar industry, like farming and the overall economy, suffered greatly throughout the depression years as markets for processed sugar dwindled. Sugar production continued in Ottawa through the 1970's as the Buckeye Sugar Company. Production reached a record 50,000 pounds of refined sugar during the 1971-72 season. The plant remains in use today for tomato processing as a division of Hirzel Canning, Ottawa Foods.

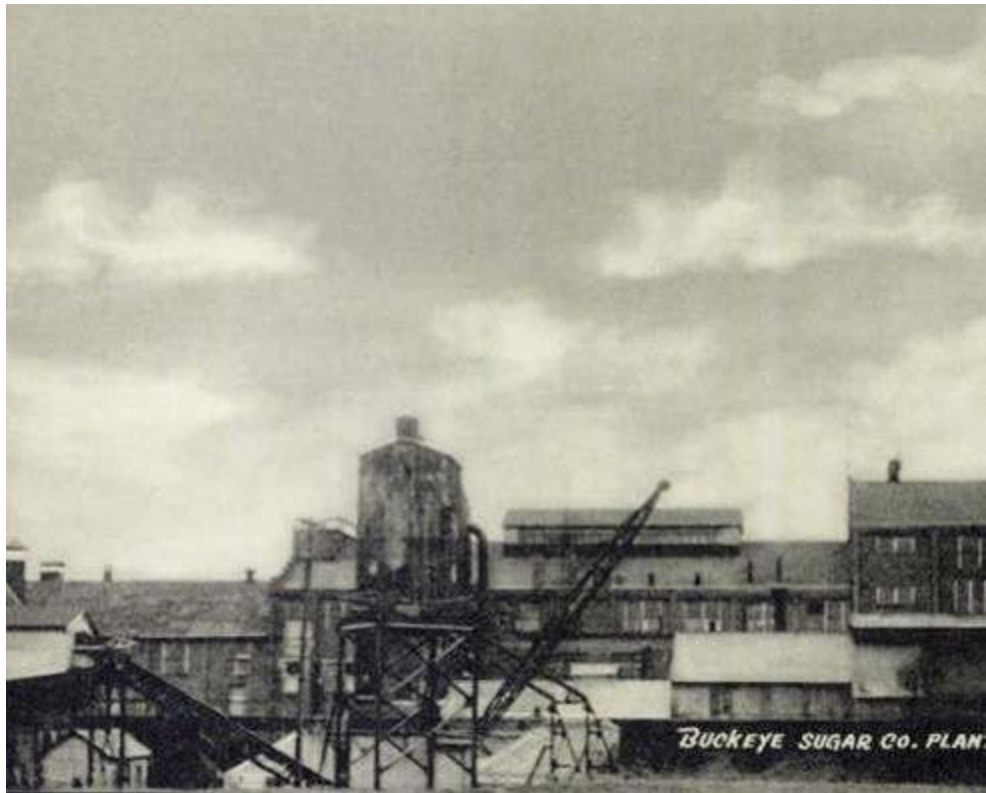
Ohio Sugar Company
Later became the Buckeye Sugar Company.



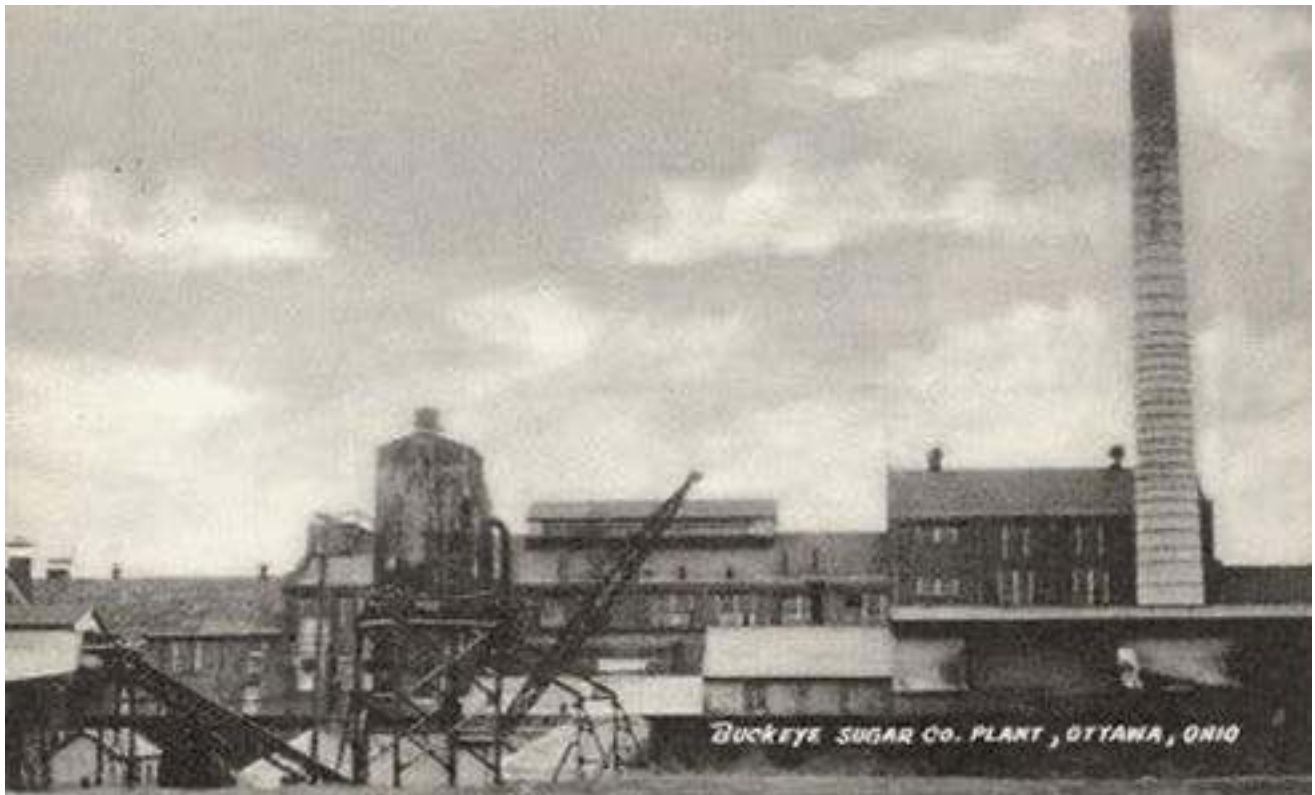
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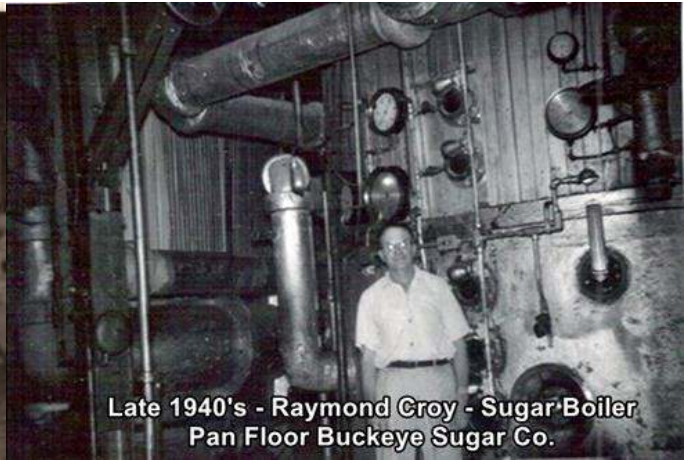


This early photo of the Ottawa Sugar Plant shows sugar beets being delivered to outside storage piles awaiting processing. Trains delivered the beets which were then unloaded by horse and wagon. (1913-1914)

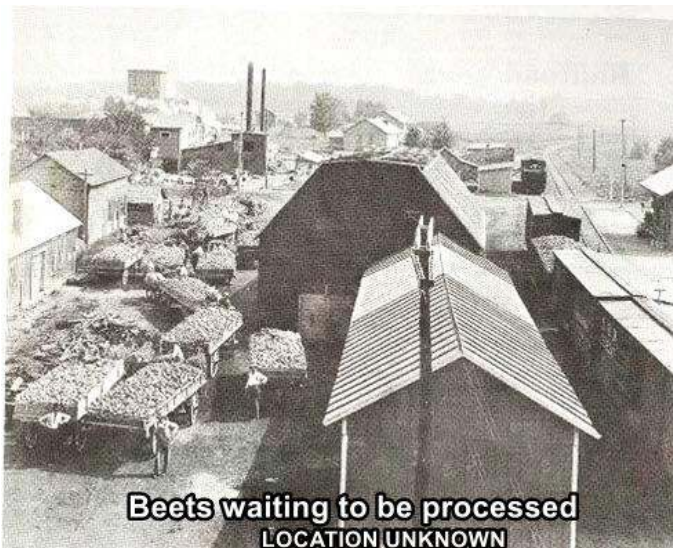


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→ Sugar production diagram

