

In Good Growing Season, Scholl Orchards Celebrates Golden Anniversary

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quehanna University in Selinsgrove in 1967 with bachelor's in business. A year later, George assumed the business.

"In the 1960s, Dad was in his late 50s and didn't have the desire to pursue the work of the orchard," said Scholl. George indicated he would be willing to take over the business. The market, once simply a table placed out front for the loy-

al customers from Bethlehem and surrounding areas, evolved into a small 8 foot by 10 foot shed in the early 1950s and was replaced with a market measuring 20 feet by 26 feet in 1972.

That same year, an apple cider pressroom was built, a press was purchased, and more trees were planted. George's father already owned a plot of land a couple of miles from the location, on which additional apple trees were

planted. This land was later sold in 1987.

An additional orchard, in Kempton, was leased in 1982 and purchased in 1983. On this property was a six-acre block of producing apple trees. With the help of a family friend, Al Parenti, the Scholls planted, over a period of several years, approximately eight acres of peaches, along with a few rows of sour cherries, plums, nectarines, and pears.

"Our two main fruits are apples and peaches," said Scholl, who has a full-time job as an insurance claims investigator. With sons Jacob, 16 and Ben, 19, Scholl maintains 9-10 acres in apples, 9-10 acres in peaches, and sour cherries and other stone fruit. All fruit is sold at the retail market at the farm location.

In season, the Scholls purchase vegetables and other items from several Mennonite farmers in the Kutztown area. Sweet corn is purchased from Twin Maple Acres Farm in Bath. The Scholls don't sell strawberries or bedding plants at the retail market.

The market opens June 20-25 with sour cherries. (They once tried sweet cherries, but because of bird and rodent control problems, abandoned them.) They begin the fruit season with the early, Lodi apples, in mid-July. About July 20 they begin selling sweet corn and peaches.

As the season progresses, Scholl Orchards sells tomatoes, peppers, cantaloupe, zucchini, summer squash, and other items.

Their busiest season is late summer and early fall, when customers arrive and the retail farm market "goes nuts," Scholl noted, selling more than 20 varieties of peaches overall.

"Peach season is our big season," said Scholl.

Early varieties include Garnet Beauty, Early Red Frè, and Jerseyland. Mid-season peaches include Red Haven, Sun High, Harmony, Loring, Salem, and Sun Crest. Late varieties include Crest Haven, Red Skin, Autumn Glow, Sweet Sue, Encore, White Hale, and others.

Harmony is a big seller for Scholl. It's a mid-season peach, a good, fresh market item. Scholl's own favorite is Sun High.

What differentiates the items Scholl sells on the market with



In this photo dated October 1952, George Scholl, in plaid coat, leans against the truck operated by his father, Reginald. With them is George's sister, Joanne (Scholl) Brackebury. A load of apples is going to a local cider mill for pressing.



The Scholls use a cider press built by Orchard Equipment and Supply of Conway, Mass. in 1965 and modified to grind up a larger quantity of apples for hour for the market. Scholl said the machine can produce about 100 gallons of cider per hour. Pressing is two to three times a week at 100-120 gallons per pressing. "We try to keep the cider fresh," he said. The Scholls don't want to sell cider older than three days. They press about 2,000-3,000 gallons per year.



Jake Scholl with a half bushel of peaches at the Kempton farm.



The Scholl Orchard farm stand was set up in 1948, laden with baskets of apples in several varieties.

store-bought items is their locally grown freshness.

He said that customers who purchase from the supermarkets and chain stores are eating peaches "picked in California and shipped 10 days to two weeks before," he said. The fruit is picked unripened yet firm to withstand the long journey. He said that supermarket customers could take a peach and drop it on the floor, pick it up, put it back on the display case, and not have to

worry about it.

But a peach picked up and dropped at Scholl's market would just explode with juice, "because it's so ripe," he said.

Also, for the customers who pick peaches for baking, a ripe product is necessary.

Beginning in September, apple sales begin. New varieties at the orchard include Jonagold, Gala, and Fuji. They also sell Northern Spy, which is grown by few

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The Scholls restored this 1946 Farmall A tractor, purchased from Faith's late father, Jack Bailey. Luke Smith, George and Faith's nephew, sits atop.