

Poultry Industry Can Thank Rasperrys for Healthy Flocks

The Fayette Hatchery is currently owned and operated by Roy D. Couch. It was started by the late W L "Wash" Raspberry and his wife Miss Katie Lee, in about 1928. They operated an old steam incubator and fired it around-the-clock, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for three months the first part of the year. It was always closed down before the first of May, as May hatched chicks would not live, so people thought.

So, Wash decided to do something about that. There was a disease in the breeder hen that was passed on to the chick. Wash went to each farm where hatching eggs were produced and took a blood sample from each breeder and discarded the breeder that had the disease before the egg was ever brought into the incubator.

He was the first in the State of Alabama to cleanse the disease from his breeder flock.

The contributions that Wash and Miss Katie made to the poultry industry in this area could not be covered in the whole page of this paper, much less this very small column.

In about 1941, the hatchery and farm supply store that were operated were sold to the present owner, Roy D Couch who operated it, supplying checks, feed, fertilizer and many other farm supplies to the farmers in this area.

In 1955, a farm was purchased just north of the city and modern laying houses were built and a hatchery was installed a few years later.

The chick production has grown steadily since the beginning from a few hundred chicks per week to more than 100,000 per week.

The hatchery and farm has furnished employment to several hundred men and women over the years, and currently has a payroll of more than \$50,000 annually.

The chicks produced here go into several North Alabama counties and are raised by farmers mostly

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