

Vine Co - Vineland Egg Producers

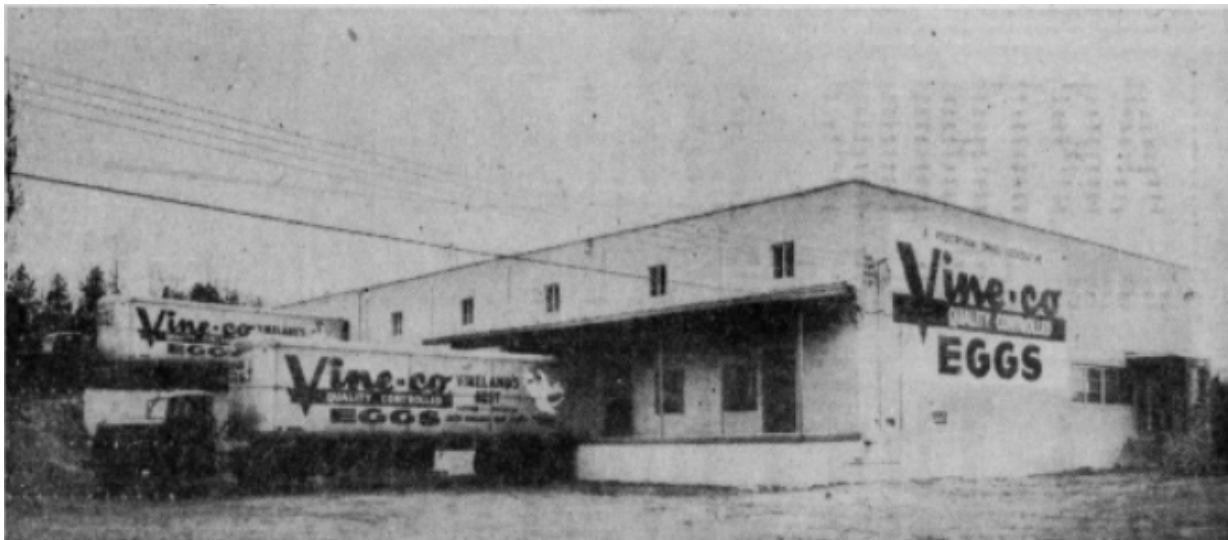
Poultry Farmers of Cumberland County

Location

Sherman Ave & Orchard Road
Vineland, NJ
Cumberland County

Years Active

1951-1960's



Description

Founded in 1951, Vine-Co Quality Controlled Eggs was established by multiple poultry farmers in Cumberland County as a way to locally compete with newly established large-scale factories and egg-producing farms. It was a separately incorporated business that grew out of the Vine-Co Cooperative Poultry Association, which dated back to the 1920s. By creating a cooperatively owned wholesale and marketing company, Vine-Co replaced commercial middlemen. Individual poultrymen who joined Vine-Co produced the eggs on their farms, and supplied them to "their" cooperatively owned Vine-Co Co-op, which processed them – washing, "candling," sorting by size, and packaging them as

Vine-Co brand eggs. The Co-op marketed member-produced eggs, and by ensuring a quality product, they could leverage better prices paid by retailers. Vine-Co contracted to supply eggs to large grocery chains in urban markets like New York and Philadelphia.

All egg producers in the region could join Vine-Co and enjoy the benefits of somewhat higher egg prices. However, alongside Italian-American, Hispanic-American, and other non-Jewish farmers, Holocaust Survivors from Vineland's Jewish community were preminent both as elected members of the board of directors and in managerial roles. Sali Mayerfeld, who arrived in the area as a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, was a charter member of the board. Helmut Leeser was elected Vine-Co president in 1956. Other Holocaust Survivors who served in various roles include Arthur Kahn (Treasurer), Bernard Dauman (Manager), and Willi Siegel (Business Committee).

Advertising in the Vineland *Daily Journal*, the Vine-Co Co-op offered this testimonial: "The aim of this cooperative was to distribute the highest quality of Vineland eggs to the discriminating retailer. Eggs produced on the farms of Vine-Co members are candled and packaged in their modern, air-conditioned building. Every day, shipments are rushed to urban markets that know the Vine-Co product by its excellence. Area farmers are urged to check into the Vine-Co operation and compare its advantages over any other operation."

In 1956, when Vine-Co opened a large modern processing plant at the intersection of Sherman Avenue and Orchard Road. This was a major accomplishment.



Advertisement showing the stages in Vine-Co egg processing ⇒

Another Co-op, the Farmers' Cooperative Association (FCA), founded in 1951 in nearby Norma, bought chicken feed in bulk and resold it to family farmers at prices below what individual poultrymen would otherwise pay at a retail feed store. In 1956, the FCA built a \$600,000 feed mill in Norma where they produced their own bulk feed.



⇐ Milestone reached: Vine-Co's volume increased from 85 cases of eggs in 1951 to over 5000 cases in 1956

Photo was taken at the official opening of a new Vine-Co processing facility in South Vineland, 1956.



Sources and for more information see

South Jersey Holocaust Survivor Digital Archive, Sara and Sam Schoffer Holocaust Resource Center at Stockton University.

Daily Journal, Vineland, 1956

Profiles of South Jersey Holocaust Survivors by George D. Quinn (Project Lead), with contributions by Dr. Michael Hayse (Curator & Editor) and description by Allison Kisielis.