

Originally published by the
Yakima Herald-Republic
on March 16, 1988

Herald

Local History

People

BIO 00042



My First Job by Phil Anderson

I came to Grandview when I was 12 years old, and the first thing I did to make money was to thin apples for old man Cave south of town. Went to work on April 15, 1926 for 10 cents an hour, and made good money.

A little later on I went into the trucking and produce business. I took a big radio set down to Art and Mildred Krous and traded them straight across for a truck of theirs, a 1927 Chevrolet. I think it was a ton-and-a-half. I hauled stuff for people with that.

Pretty soon I was hauling for F.M. Balcom Company here in Grandview, going to Seattle for them. I decided I maybe oughta get into that business. I liked the idea of buying the produce and selling it myself.

I bought hay, apples, spuds, onions, rutabagas -- you name it. I think the biggest loss I ever had was on rutabagas. I bought them for \$40 a ton, and put them in cold storage. But they weren't worth anything, and finally I hauled them out and just dumped them. Probably had 1,000 tons.

We used to buy a lot of Concord grapes. We'd haul them to Cle Elum or Spokane and sell them to Italians to make wine out of them.

I had GMC, Graham Brothers and Chevrolet trucks back then. Chuck Waters drove for me, and my brother Jack Anderson, and Otto Fund and Stan Krous. The company name was Phil Anderson Produce.

I remember one other bad deal once, with onions. I bought about 600 tons of onions, from around the Toppenish-Wapato area for \$6 a ton. I kept them in storage at the Harrah Stor-

age Company 'til April. Hans Benz was running the storage company, and he finally said he'd trade me those onions for the storage, so I just gave them to him. It wasn't two weeks later that he got them sold for \$15 a ton!

In the fall of 1939 I went into the new car business. We opened the Dodge-Plymouth business over on Avenue A. Finally sold the trucks and quit buying produce in 1946.

I guess I could have retired by now, but I never made enough money to retire! You get narrow minded, I guess, and just keep on at what you're doing. Have to have something for your mind to work on.

Phil Anderson was born in Sheridan, Wyo., and came to Grandview with his family in 1926 when he was 12 years old. He attended Grandview schools, and went into business for himself as a young man.

After operating Phil Anderson Produce in the 1930's and 1940's, he opened Anderson Motor Company in 1939, and opened a farm equipment business in 1947 featuring the Massey Ferguson line. The original company headquarters on Avenue A burned in Jan., 1977, but the company relocated to Main Street. Phil is still the owner of Anderson Equipment and of Anderson Motors, which is managed by Mel Schwisow. His son, Phil Anderson Jr., also works in all aspects of the family businesses.

Phil is married, and also has two step-children with his wife D'Etta.

Interviewed by Barbara Olmstead.