



In the early phases of the industry, Georgia led the nation in commercial pimiento production and processing. At one time, the state boasted as many as 20 processing plants, such as the one shown above.

Photo — Ga. Archives

tough outer covering with a clean cloth.

The Spanish roasting technique was adopted and by 1913, Riegel even perfected a mechanical roasting device known as a "coke roaster." Family members continued canning research in a small shed on a farm near Pomona, a few miles from Griffin.

During the summer of 1914, a Griffin wholesale grocery marketed the pimientos. Success of this first marketing endeavor led to the construction of a large processing facility near Pomona in 1916. Known as The Pomona Products Company, the operation was probably one of the largest processing facilities in Georgia at the time. The total pimiento crop planted during that year was 75 acres, expanding to 100 acres the following year.

During this period, pimiento production was concentrated in about 15 counties in the vicinity of Spalding County. Research at the Georgia Experiment Station contributed to the expansion of the crop. By 1927, some 3700 acres of pimientos were harvested in Georgia with production valued at over \$200,000. Two years later, acreage nearly doubled with a yield of 12,350 tons.

Walter C. Graefe, president of Pomona Products, is credited with promoting and developing the commercial pepper industry. The success of Pomona Products blazed a trail that made Georgia the nation's leading state in pimiento canning. While the industry was expanding, Graefe and other processors found that they were experiencing many common problems. For this reason