

next year another 100 acres along the west boundary became available and that was purchased making a 180-acre farm.

**Litter.** Birds were raised on litter of straw. Indiana grew an abundance of wheat and, therefore, straw was abundant. However the straw was not very absorbent. Next, the very absorbent ground stalks of sugar cane were used until it became too expensive. Finally, ground corncobs with wheat grain were used. Because wheat was a preferred food of a chicken, the chicken would peck constantly to find it, all the while throwing the litter in the air, drying it and extending its use! However, it became clear that the chicken was expending a lot of energy pecking which required more feed! At this point houses went to slatted floors and then to cages where litter was no longer necessary.

**Egg markets drop.** The egg market dropped and eggs sold for 10-to-12 cents a dozen. CB dropped the Chicago markets because of the many bankruptcies there. CB was losing more money than they were making because many accounts paid once a month and other accounts paid quarterly. It was no longer productive to ship and sell in Chicago.

## 1935 10 YEARS

**Creighton Brothers**

**Phone Atwood 518**

**Principal source of income: Market Eggs**

**30 employees.**

**9000 birds---1500 were pullets under ROP supervision.**

**350 acres.**

**Professional Organizations:** International Baby Chick Association, Indiana State Poultry Association, Indiana ROP Breeders Association.

**Mentone, Indiana was the 'Egg Basket of the Midwest'.**

The area farmers, including CB, established the Northern Indiana Cooperative Association (NICA) in Mentone. They literally assisted with the construction of the elevator and in 2 to 3 years it paid for itself. The Cooperative also assisted getting eggs to market. Egg producers did not set the price; it was determined in New York.

Farmers brought their eggs to the NICA for grading, packing and weekly shipping to the New York jobbers. The New York buyers quote prices and if you wanted to sell at that price you could. Eggs were shipped in rail car lots and delivered to the various distributors by the trucking firm to whom each car was shipped. Each shipper marked

cases to the distributor wanting his eggs; the following week or so the Indiana farmer received his check directly from the New York receiver.

**Hatchery.** Hatchery was doubled to hold new incubators giving a capacity for 60,000 CB eggs.

**Brooding.** CB utilized brooder houses, 10'x12', lined in rows with 288 in a group called a 'block'. Nearly 350 day-old chicks were put into each with a hard coal or an electric heater. When the chicks were 8 weeks old the brooder houses were moved farther apart (75' to 100') so the chicks could come and go freely in and around the houses. They were now fed and watered outside. A horse driven wagon would go up and down each row and feed was shoveled into troughs along the rows where the water line ran.

**Marketing and Sales Catalog:** "Hens have built our farm! We started in the poultry business from scratch so every building, incubator, equipment and land has been acquired because of the profit returned to us by our productive leghorns. . . . Here it is (our story). It is not an expensive folder -- but it portrays our place just as it is. . . . We were born and brought up, went to school and were married in this neighborhood...We have 357 acres devoted to our laying and breeding birds...Russell and I did not inherit this business---we *have built it all within the last ten years.* We have no limits---no hide-bound precedents to guide us---just one objective, *if we get the eggs we will make the money...*We have been plugging along -- trying to use our heads and working our hands and feet plenty -- until now we have over 9000 white leghorns, our own breeding, with 1500 pullets entered in the Indiana Record of Performance work, and have never failed to make money from our flocks *judged by our egg checks.*"

## 1936

**CB ranked among the 9 best breeding plants in the U. S. based upon the egg-laying contests from Maine to Texas in 1935-1936.** CBs' bird was sold under the trade name of "Creighton Leghorn".

**CB joined the National Poultry Improvement Plan.**

**CBs' hatchery became U.S. Indiana Certified.** All chicks were U.S. Certified meaning that a hen approved and banded by a qualified selecting agent, who was our state R.O. P. inspector, produced each chick. The female bird was a pedigreed bird out of the U.S. R.O.P. hens with yearly records of 200 or more eggs. This hen was mated to an U.S.-R.O.P. male bird that was sired by males from hens laying over 200-225 eggs. In addition, an official selecting agent inspected the flock at least twice a year with one inspection taking place during the hatching season.

CB hatched its own eggs and its 140,000-hatchery capacity allowed CB to meet its own demands and the demands of its customers. The hatchery produced 30,000 chicks per week---a 24-hr. operation now! Seven Petersime electric Hatchibators gave CB a combined capacity of

140,000 eggs at a setting devoted exclusively to eggs from CB owned farms.

Marketing included a magazine, "Creighton Bros.", and an order form that was mailed over an 8-10 state range soliciting baby chick orders from 25 to 500 baby chicks. Eighty percent of the chicks went to egg producers in northern Indiana.

**'CREIGHTON LEGHORNS' gave CB the highest rank of any Leghorn breeder east of the Mississippi River according to the Poultry Item award for 1936-1937.** This award was based on the production of 50 birds in official egg laying contests with an average of 264.4 eggs and 274.2 points. The birds won the Hunterdon County Egg Laying Contest in New Jersey establishing an all-time high record for official egg laying contests conducted in that state. CBs' birds also ranked first among White Leghorns at the 1936-1937 Rhode Island Contest.

CB had the second high pen at the Central New York Contest. Hanson from Oregon won this contest setting an all-time high record for U.S. contests. His birds averaged 313 eggs. We tied with another poultry farm for the livability trophy awarded by Hatchery Tribune with a livability for one year of 93.3%. This livability was based on an entry of five pens (65 birds) in the official cxon tests, 61 of which were returned to use at the end of the year." (CB advertisement in program at 3rd annual Mentone Egg Show, 1938)

**Record of Performance.** A total of 2,875 birds were trapnested under the Indiana Record of Performance Supervision----one of the largest U.S. certified flocks in the country. CB produced 54 birds laying over 300 eggs in 1936.

**Construction.** The 2 new chicken houses were completely insulated to handle any type of weather.

CBs' expansion was great after the purchase of the Russell farm. The 'Creighton House', their preferred type of chicken house, was built 210' X 30' and could hold 2,400 chickens---1200 at each end with the feed and storage area in the center. The gable type house had a 6 ft. height at the eaves, solid sheathing, and insulation board on top of the sheathing with a built up roof. All of these houses were built running east and west with the windows all along the south side. Feed and water lines ran through the middle.

The nests were located along the north wall. The dropping boards and perches were set out from the north wall 4 ft. giving plenty of room for an aisle between the nests and perches. A motor truck could be driven through the house from end-to-end reducing the labor required for cleaning and scrubbing when the house was vacant between flocks. The feed storage room was in the center and feed was carried to the feeders by bucket. Later, to encourage local farmers to get into the chicken business, CB gave away the architectural plans for this specific chicken house.

Ten laying houses were built to the 210'x30' specifications. At one point in a 2 yr. period, CB built 5 houses adding 10,000 chickens and soon too much egg capacity for the basement of Hobart's house.

In the 1935-1955 era, hen houses were grouped five to a farm. The population of a farm was 12,500 layers and two men worked 9 hour days, seven days a week to care for the birds. Feeding was done by hand and eggs were gathered 5 times a day in baskets and carried to the cooling cellar on each farm.

### **Comments:**

\*\*\*"We made money from this strain ( Creighton-strain Leghorns) every year during the depression. We offer you identically the same type of chick" (Hobart, 1936)

\*\*\*"Coming up 'from scratch' in 12 short years to the point where we now control the destinies of about 20,000 White Leghorns, would have been utterly impossible without **profitable production** irrespective of the ratio between feed costs and egg prices. Our commercial egg enterprise has never failed to make money **judging from our egg checks**" (Hobart, 1936)

\*\*\*STEPS TO EXCLUSIVELY HATCHING CB EGGS:

1. A keen interest in poultry dating back to high school days.
2. Experimental work with one flock on our own farm.
3. The purchase of best available Leghorns from nearby neighbors.
4. The purchase, at 3 different times, of eggs and stock direct from the Hanson farm.
5. The operation of a commercial egg plant... we keep over 20,000 birds on our own property.
6. Entry into R.O.P. work to check OFFICIALLY the very thing we knew UNOFFICIALLY from our egg checks.
7. The operation of a breeding plant and hatchery which was but an outgrowth of our commercial plant.
8. A construction crew...for our own and other Indiana farms. Two, and usually more, men are busy throughout the year with new construction or improvement work...  
...We did not start a hatchery as a hopeful 'side-line' to some other vocation, but we worked toward it—and started it to meet a demand—from the solid foundation of KNOWN MONEYMAKING FLOCKS. We didn't bore in from the outside but rather worked out from the very core of the chicken business—BIG EGG PRODUCTION." (Hobart, 1936)

**CBs' baseball team played at Center Lake Park in Warsaw.** A company team of either baseball or softball has played nearly every year up to the current date, July 2000.

## **1938**

### **CB---largest poultry farm in Indiana!**

**John Frederick came to CB on July 1, 1938.** Hobart judged a baby chick show at the University of Kentucky where John was finishing his degree in Poultry Husbandry. The Head of the University of Kentucky Poultry Department introduced John to Hobart in the livestock pavilion. They spoke for about 15 minutes and John agreed to go to Indiana to work for Creighton Brothers. John realized that jobs were difficult to obtain at that time so he was eager to secure any kind of employment. John arrived at midnight on July 1, 1938 and Hobart had

him up at 4:00 AM to load lumber on a truck to be used for building a chicken house.

John was offered \$100.00 a month salary or \$75.00 a month salary with room/board. John chose the \$75.00 and the room/board at Hobart's home.

John worked in every aspect of the farm. Quickly, though, he took an active role in operation and management. Hobart, involved with the state legislature, gave direction and guidance to John and John became responsible for the operation of CBS' incubation and brooding programs as well as supervising the staff. Eventually, John became General Manager with no particular moment in time when that officially occurred.

" Fortunately, Hobart just turned it over--'You do it your way'. . .We'd get together. I'd listen. When you were talking with Hobart, you listened. When you got out in the field sometimes you did it different." (1998, John Frederich)

According to John, there was no formal partnership arrangement between Hobart and Russell in 1938. Also in 1938, CB was paying taxes but no Social Security was taken out of pay. (John Frederich, 1999)

**New Egg Basement.** Across highway #30 from the Russell farm, William Creighton, the boy's father, had purchased 10 acres for a potato patch. CB eventually bought this acreage and built a "little white building" as it was called---the new egg basement. The lower floor was used for grading and preparation for shipment. Using a Wyland Egg Grader, 20 cases of eggs were graded an hour. The "Magic Egg Cleaner" could clean 4 dozen eggs at a time--- except for the ends that still had to be hand-sanded to clean. The upper level was storage.

CB now had a panel truck and a deliveryman to transport eggs from the houses to the egg basement.

**Wages.** The normal workday was a ten-hour day. The highest paid CB employee made 30 cents/hour or \$18.00/week. One man was responsible for 4000 chickens.

**Harrison Center School was bought with a bid of \$1000.00.** The school was being sold at the Court House with a minimum \$1000 bid. CB bid the minimum and became the new owners of the school. Russell built nests and set oil burners prior to filling it with layers. Eventually the building was torn down.

**CB made attempts to grow out the male line of commercial Leghorns for broilers.** A building across from the box factory on #15 in Warsaw was rented and both floors were filled with chickens. CB rented some local barns as well to grow out the leghorns. Russell checked the birds every night to make sure they were roosting and not smothering each other in the corners. The birds did not put on enough meat so the operation was dissolved. CB, along with other

local farmers, was attempting to produce broilers from an 'egg-type' bird. The broiler industry later flourished primarily in the southern states utilizing a 'meat type' bird.

## 1939

**New York World's Fair.** Hobart and Russell, along with some 100 other farmers across the US, were invited to be guests of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company at the New York World Fair. These farmers were recognized as 'champion' farmers primarily for their status in the nation but also for using Firestone tires on their vehicles and tractors! CB did use their products. One particular afternoon, the festivities centered upon the presence of Harvey Firestone and Henry Ford.

**Dark egg yolks received a high premium from noodle factories.** When chickens brooded on grass their yolks were deep in color and noodle factories paid a premium for these eggs because it was against the law for factories to add color to noodles. At one time CB ordered marigold petals from Mexico and added them to the feed enhancing the dark yolks to gain a premium for these eggs.

### **Typical Annual Cycle of Farm Crew at CB Farms:**

Spring: Crew worked in the hatchery because the hatchery ran from January to May.

Summer: Crew worked construction building chicken houses or making repairs.

Fall: Crew of 6 to 7 blood tested each bird for Pullorum Disease taking about 6 weeks.

Winter: Crew repaired buildings or machinery.

## 1940

**R. R. 5, Warsaw, Indiana**

**Telephone Atwood 512**

**"AMERICA'S LARGEST R.O.P. BREEDERS"** "...our White Leghorns have built America's largest Record of Performance breeding farm. Hundreds of hatchery men each year come to us for pedigreed chicks with which to improve the flocks from which they buy eggs. Several of America's prominent breeders have come to us for male birds to head their best special matings. Several hundred commercial poultry men come to us each year for the chicks which later develop into profitable layers." (CB advertisement in program for 5th Annual Mentone Egg Show, 1940)

**Record of Performance program---10 years.** The 1939 average production equaled 258 eggs. Average egg size was 26.01 oz. Average body weight was 5.18 lbs.

**Hatchery.** The average chick order was for 100-200 and an order of 1000 was considered large. Orders were delivered by parcel post if over 50 miles away; closer deliveries were made with CBs' panel truck. The Hatchery had 3 levels of chickens: U.S. Approved, U.S. Certified and Record of Performance chickens.

**Ohio Farm---acquired it by 'accident'.** A poultry farm became available just south of Toledo, Ohio. The farm, standing empty, had 13 poultry houses, a huge barn with elevator, and a farm home. The previous owner was in need of selling and took closed bids. CB made a cash bid, not expecting to meet the farmer's demands, yet to their surprise became the new owner! CB filled the houses with 15,000 layers and proceeded making a 'working farm' again of this facility. Eventually this farm was sold because it was too costly to maintain and manage since it was so far from the main CB complex.

The manager of the Ohio Farm in 1940 made \$15.00 per week, rent, electricity, coal and gas money to go back and forth to Indiana.

**Hobart served on the Executive Committee of the 1st Poultry-Egg National Board.** He was also President of the U.S. Record of Performance Federation.

## 1941

**Second annual Christmas Dinner.** Hobart and Russell entertained over 200 employees and families and other guests for a 'bountiful' turkey dinner on December 23rd in the U.B. Atwood church. In the CO-OP NEWS, the employees related their appreciation:

*Thanks. . . .*

**CREIGHTON BROTHERS!**

For the swell Christmas Party-----

For the generous Christmas Bonus Checks-----

For being two great fellows to work for!----

**YOUR EMPLOYEES**

## 1942

**Prior to WW II, most egg production came from flocks of less than 400 hens.**

**CB sold chickens in the Montgomery Ward catalog in 1942 and 1943 based upon the American Heritage Center (University of Wyoming) housing the Montgomery Ward Records.** One could purchase the English White Leghorns in quantities of 25 to 500 for a cost of \$6.00 to \$104.00 and one could purchase 100 chicks for \$3 a month. CB also sold the White Leghorn Breeding cockeral for \$5.50 each.----- *"During the war years you tried anything. CB didn't do this but a few years." (Gale Creighton, 1999)*

**CB operated at capacity but couldn't expand because building supplies were not available.** Regularly, CB wrote customers that they could only fill an order partially or could delay filling an order due to not being able to keep up with demand.

**WW II made an impact on personnel with about 30% of CBs' employees going into the service.** Labor was short at CB. At that time some Amish were hired and they drove their buggies about 10 miles to take care of CBs' chickens. They would tie their buggies outside the chicken house during the day then go home at night, do their chores and be back to work again early the next morning.

Women began working in the processing plant for the first time. After the war, GI's looked for higher paying jobs rather than the low-paying farm work. The labor pool continued to be short. CB began hiring many migrants from the Kentucky coalmines. At this time, a revolution took place in the labor force in the local poultry industry and women continued working in the processing plant.

**U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Claude Wickard, requested the American poultry industry increase their supply of chickens by 200,000,000, reared to a weight of 3 pounds, to meet the impending shortage during the winter after sufficient quantities of red meats were reserved for the military and lend-lease requirements.** Hobart was Chairman of the National Poultry Defense Committee and was required to rally the nation's poultry farmers to meet this demand on top of the already extra chickens, eggs and grain the farmers were supplying for the war time requirements. Laying hens in the US had already increased by 13% and sale of chickens for meat by about 17% prior to this request.



# 1943 WW II

**CREIGHTON BROTHERS**  
Route 5, WARSAW INDIANA  
PHONE ATWOOD 4

## OUR POULTRY FRIENDS:

*Well, here we are again getting ready for another big chick season. Last year we hatched chicks at our full capacity until the middle of June to fill our orders. We are sorry some of our old customers had to wait so long. We were going to print a new catalog this fall, but due to the shortage of paper and help we decided to send you this four-page letter. Our advice is:*

- 1. Order your baby chicks early.*
- 2. Buy the best chicks possible and take good care of them.*
- 3. Clean out brooder houses and condition your poultry equipment this winter,*
- 4. Start the chicks on clean grass range.*

*We are enclosing our price list. We suggest you order before January 1. Creighton Brothers wishes you a very successful 1944.*

*Cordially yours,*

*Hobart Creighton  
Russell Creighton*

## **East Coast poultry farms were hurt worse than Midwest poultry farmers and many farms closed. New York brokers had difficulty finding eggs.**

*A New York broker writes: "Dear Hobart: Some years ago we received many cases of large eggs then we got medium and pullet and peewees. Lately we've got down to the dented ones, as one would call them. Now we are down and out. How come? Hobart, what must we pay for your eggs?"*

**CB sold and customers ordered utilizing the penny postcards.** CB sent chicks, hatching eggs and graded eggs by railway express all over the United States; travel took 3 to 4 days. CB received hundreds of letters informing them of the state of the product upon receipt or requesting assistance with nutrition for their chicks. Letters were answered using carbon paper for the copies.

**CB ordered trailer loads of whiskey barrels and each load had 75 to 80 barrels.** The 55-gallon oak barrels were purchased to take to the dairy to buy buttermilk. When CB bought a barrel of buttermilk the company would pay CB for the barrel. The barrels were re-worked

and painted yellow before the company filled them with the buttermilk.

These barrels were heavy, about 500 lbs., but the crew learned to rock and roll them into an upright position.

Everyday about noon the hens were fed buttermilk, a protein supplement in a 'wet mash'. Chickens loved buttermilk! This food supplement stimulated their appetite improving their dietary nutrition and hopefully stimulating their egg production.

Buttermilk was used when chickens brooded on the ground and then in houses. In the houses, the semi-solid buttermilk was ladled onto the feed in the stationery feeders. When buttermilk became difficult to obtain, whey blocks were used, again, as a supplement to the feed. Nutrition expertise was learned in a trial and error fashion. Feeding experts did not agree on the nutrient requirements for birds raised in confinement but it was believed that the diets should include some meat protein, some grass material like alfalfa leaf meal and a milk product since it was the 'near perfect' food.

When automatic or conveyor feeding was being considered in the industry, the deletion of buttermilk was a concern but the nutritionists developed formulas to include the buttermilk nutrients into the grain.

**First semi-truck was purchased in the early 1940's.** The truck hauled feed from Illinois and took materials to CBs' Ohio farm.

**Hatchery.** Additional incubators were added. The hatchery produced about 500,000 chicks annually.

## 1946

**New office and hatchery complex.** The office was located on U.S. Highway #30 and its construction began in May 1945. The space included several offices for key employees, general office space and a conference room. The shop was in the west end. Much of the farm's repair work was done here because it was equipped with power saws, drills, welding equipment and stapling machines. Too, it was equipped with a conveyor for loading trucks which daily departed with commercial eggs. (Later, the area was converted to office space.)

Downstairs the hatchery held 5 new Buckeye incubators and an old Petersime Incubator. One Buckeye Streamliner incubator could hatch 99,000 eggs.

CB purchased its first generator, a war surplus, for back-up electricity in the Hatchery.

**The names of Esther and Helen Creighton, the boy's wives, were included on CBs' stationery letterhead.** Stationery in 1951 also had their names on it.

**1947**

**Hobart was President of the Poultry and Egg National Board.**

**New Building for Egg Grading and Handling.** Across the drive from the office a brick building was erected; the east end had a basement for egg grading; the west end was ground level and used for lumber storage, the shop and truck parking at night. The top level was storage space. A tunnel between the old egg basement to the new one held track to send eggs back and forth. The I-Beams from the former Harrison School were used in this facility.

Roof Gardner Egg Company in Pennsylvania used the old egg basement for a distribution center after CB packed the eggs. When they moved, CB began packing eggs under its own name. The University of Notre Dame became one of the largest customers.

**1950  
25 YEARS**

**CREIGHTON BROTHERS**  
BREEDERS OF  
**WHITE LEGHORNS**

Box 20, Warsaw, Indiana      Phone Warsaw 153-J

**The largest U.S. R.O.P. Breeding Farm under the National Poultry Improvement Plan in Indiana.**

- \* **2000 acres.**
  - \* **19th year in Record of Performance work.**
  - \* **12 million eggs** revealed the high hen-housed average of CB flocks.
  - \* **9 million eggs were sold as quality market eggs.**
  - \* **800,000 chicks** hatched each year, the progeny of only CB flocks.
  - \* **3 million hatching eggs** from CBS' mating assured the high production characteristics of the Creighton Strain.
  - \* **Forty-five laying houses** gave first hand insight to egg production problems.
  - \* **75,000 pullet chicks and 10,000 pedigreed cockerel chicks** brooded on ranges to develop a vital, healthy chick the next year.
- "Although we consider ourselves primarily a breeding farm, our large commercial egg production has been the 'proving ground' of our breeding methods." (Hobart, 1950)**

**"At the present time, poultry men face very favorable conditions, ---low feed costs, and an unprecedented demand for top quality eggs. We believe in stressing quality. Top quality eggs net everyone a premium; top quality feed gives more eggs, top quality breeding stock makes us all more profit."** (Hobart & Russell-A Special Message from the Creighton Brothers, 1950)

**Hatchery had 300,000 egg capacity.** Only CB eggs were hatched to strictly control for quality. Separate hatchers were used and each was fumigated between hatches. A separate hatching egg room was maintained at proper temperatures and humidity to assure high hatchability.

**Laying houses—high hen-housed averages. . . the practical objective of the Creighton program.** CB stressed the breeding for family ability rather than individual performance. This was contrary to the practice of many breeders because averages calculated on a hen/day basis were usually better. CBS' goal of high flock performance or high hen-housed averages was the foundation of their successful commercial egg production.

Weekly, the laying houses were gone through to remove birds that were not laying at peak efficiency. The heavy culling began when the hatching season ended about May 1st of each year. Two-year old birds were marketed first.

These houses were scrubbed and disinfected. Later, some of these houses were filled with the top 25% of the yearling birds. The remainder of the yearlings was sold. Pullets were moved to the laying houses when they began to lay at or about 5 months.

The gradual process of selling, cleaning and moving lengthened the selling season of live birds; spread the work of cleaning the houses over several months; and kept the houses filled with birds for a normal flow of eggs rolling to market.

**Market eggs.** The 45 laying houses held 2400 layers each. Eggs were gathered five times daily in wire baskets covered with soft plastic. The eggs were taken conveniently into the cooling cellars under the hen house where they were dip-cleaned, cooled and crated. Daily the eggs were taken from the cellars and moved into the refrigeration rooms in the main building that housed the packing plant. There, five men and one ingenious machine graded, candled and cartoned the eggs. The machine did most of the work including weighing the eggs and then sending the eggs to the correct shute where the ladies packed the eggs by grade into cartons.

**Brooding and range rotation.** Brooder stock was raised in 300 portable brooder houses plus a number of 10 x 14 range shelters. All chicks were brooded under electric hovers regardless of the time of year. Each hover now brooded 250 chicks. Deep litter of peat moss and ground corncobs covered the brooder floors to a depth of 3 to 4 inches.