


**Tribute to Watermelon King – this is a newspaper article from Wenatchee Daily World – August 18, 1932-prepared by Sue Müllerleile and presented by Daniel Joseph Muellerleile at the family reunion on July 15, 2017**

# TRIBUTE TO THE WATERMELON KING

Louis Müllerleile



## **Columbia Basin Produces Finest Melons; Mullerleile, Melon King, Starts Picking**

Wenatchee Daily World  
August 18, 1932



Reported in the Wenatchee Daily World newspaper on August 18, 1932

### **Columbia Basin Produces Finest Melons; Mullerleile, Melon King, Starts Picking**

Quincy in the Columbia Basin not only has one of the world's finest apple orchards, but produces watermelons of the finest texture and flavor ever found.

Louis Mullerleile, for nearly 20 years the watermelon king of North Central Washington, this week begins harvesting one of the best crops of watermelons and cantaloupes he has ever grown, and before the season is over will have put 250 tons of melons on the tables of Washington homes.

Asked why his melons are so sweet and well-flavored and always in demand, Mullerleile says: 'It's the soil.' The soil of Quincy valley has every necessary mineral and chemical. It is rich; it is complete; it is a unit. But Mullerleile himself knows melon raising--when and how to plant, what to plant, how to irrigate and how to cultivate. On 14 acres this year he will have 250 tons.

Pheasants are the worst pests. He must watch to keep them off the patch from daylight until 10 o'clock and then again in the evening. They don't feed during mid-day. A passerby will see tons of melons piled in the patch that have been ruined by one or two pecks of the pheasant's beak. Although, last winter killed most of the birds, there are plenty to ruin hundreds of 25 to 50-pound melons.

Keeping his eyes open and making a study of his profession, Mullerleile has learned many lessons-- and remembers them. In a few minutes he can give one some pointers that would save years of loss and grief—things he has learned from bitter experience.

Take 3 Columbia (basin days):

A northeast wind in 3 days blasted hundreds of gardens and cut the Quincy wheat yield 30,000 bushels, it is estimated. Mullerleile has learned that tomatoes, honeydews, banana squash, most cantaloupes, and many other garden products will not stand a northeaster, but it seldom hurts Klondike watermelons, Marblehead squash, pumpkins, or ice cream melons. It has cost him thousands of dollars to learn this lesson. "Couldn't you get this information from a county agent?" he is asked. "No, each farmer must learn it for himself, at the cost of many grey hairs". He answered.

Walking through his patch one sees cantaloupes, watermelons, squash, pumpkins, ice creams, honeydews, and even a few casabas. "Those are for Californians visiting Wenatchee", he says. "A casaba doesn't compare with other melons, but Californians don't know what good melons are" he points out.

The Simpson apple orchard at Quincy can't be duplicated in the world, Mullerleile states, and it's because of the soil. It raises stronger trees and finer apples and pays, even though water must be pumped 250 to 350 feet. Pumps have just been installed in a new 350-foot well on the Greer tract adjoining the Simpson orchard.



*Louis Müllerleile loading watermelons Quincy, Washington, October 15, 1941*



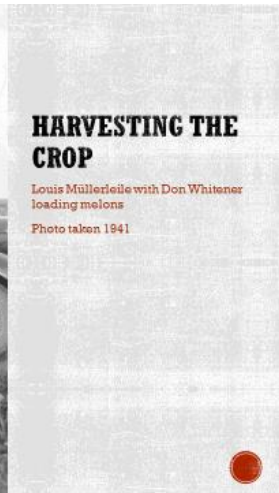
**Louis Mullerleile loading**

**watermelons-Quincy, Washington- October 15, 1941**

***Louis Mullerleile lädt Wassermelonen-Quincy, Washington - 15. Oktober 1941***

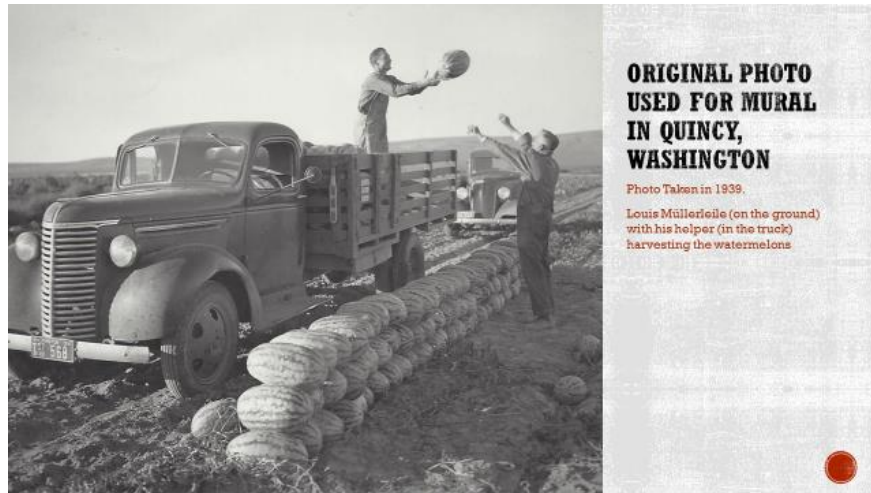


*Louis Mullerleile with Don Whitener Loading melons October 15, 1941*



**Louis Müllerleile with Don Whitener loading melons- Photo taken 1941.**

***Louis Müllerleile und Don Whitener laden Melonen - Foto aufgenommen 1941.***



**Louis Müllerleile (on the ground) with his helper (in the truck) harvesting the watermelons - 1939**

***Louis Müllerleile (am Boden) und sein Helfer (auf dem LKW) ernten Wassermelonen – 1939***



**Louis Müllerleile, Donald Whitener and Bob Petrak pose next to a truck load of watermelons in Downtown Quincy in this 1939 photo.**

Stories about Louis Mullerleile from Tom Petrak (Quincy, Washington)

As told to Sue Mullerleile at the Senior Center in Quincy Washington July 2, 2003

Tom Petrak worked for Louis Mullerleile as a boy in Quincy, Washington; Tom is in his 70's now.

Tom told me that he worked for Louis in the late 30's or early 40's. Tom used Mullerleile's .22 long rifle and sat in Louis' watermelon field in the early morning hours and after school and shot at any crow that tried to eat the watermelons on Louis' farm. Tom said he only shot about 4 or 5 crows, because they got used to Tom being there and stayed away while he was in the field. He said Mullerleile paid him ten or 15¢ per bird.

As Tom Petrak used to help Louis load the watermelons in the truck. Louis would know just by looking at them which watermelons were very sweet and good eating. When Louis was loading the watermelons and he saw one that was 'special' he would tell Tom to put that one in the cab of the truck and kept it for next year's seed. Louis never told Tom how he could tell what made one watermelon better than the other. Louis took the special watermelons home and laid the seeds out on a table to dry.

Tom Petrak told me that Louis Mullerleile had a lot of trouble with the kids in Quincy 'raiding' his watermelon farm for the sweet watermelons. Louis tried to think of ways to combat this problem also, so he took a hypodermic needle and put Croton oil (a laxative) in strategically placed watermelons. One could tell which kid had stolen those watermelons because they were sitting in the sagebrush all day because they had the 'runs'.

In 1938 or 39 Louis Mullerleile was in an accident and wrecked his truck on the way to Everett, Washington to sell a load of watermelons. He lay injured in the ditch for several hours until a passing driver saw the truck's headlights shining in the ditch and stopped and got him to the hospital. The truck was a total wreck.

Zoë Haselton Anderson told Sue Mullerleile the following at a 4th of July celebration at the Reiman –Simmons historical museum in Quincy, Washington –July 4, 2003

Zoë was demonstrating braided rug making at the museum as part of the celebration. Her Aunt Faye used to make these braided rugs and sell them. They are made out of denim or polyester fabric.

Zoë Anderson is the niece of Faye Johnson Morris (Faye Morris is the author of 'They Claimed a Desert' and 'The Birth of a Town'). Zoë told me in July 2003 that she remembers when she was a child, Louis Mullerleile would come to the school and unload a whole load of watermelons in the school yard. After the school day children were allowed to take one watermelon each home to their family. Zoë told me that all the children were so happy when he came with the watermelons. Louis would do this for many years. (Zoë is 66 years old-she was born in 1937)  
Note: Otto Henderson was the photographer who took the photos of Louis Mullerleile with his watermelons in the field and in front of his truck in town. Otto Henderson was the uncle to Faye Morris.

