



# COMPANY, ANACORTES

Seattle the Center of the World's Fishing Industry, and the Men Who Have Made It Such

A Sketch of Lee Howard Wakefield, a Big Figure in the Fishing and Canning Industry

Lee H. Wakefield was born and brought up on father's farm in Texas, where he helped his father raise corn and cotton. Left the farm and came to Orcas Island, San Juan County, Washington, 1888; helped his father to hew a farm out of a wilderness then covered with virgin timber. At the age of 17 he took a position as clerk in the store of W. E. Sutherland, general merchandise, at Orcas, remaining there four years. He left to go to Alaska in 1897, where he spent a few months in the mining camps. In 1898 he again entered business at Wrangell, Alaska, where he started a general merchandise store during the Stikine River boom. He remained at Wrangell one and one-half years, during which time he established another store at Howkan, Long Island, Alaska, placing his brother-in-law in charge thereof. In 1900 he was appointed U. S. census enumerator for the southern district of Alaska, and closed the Wrangell store. In 1900-1902 he went to Howkan, Alaska, where he took personal charge of his store. In the fall of 1902 he sold his Howkan store. For a period of about eight months thereafter he was connected with the U. S. mail service in Alaska, and during the year 1903 became associated with the Olympic Mining Company, in charge of their steamer "Capella." In this position he remained seven months. In 1904 Mr. Wakefield was appointed administrator of the Sylvester estate at Wrangell, where he remained about a year. Following this, he went to Anacortes, Washington, and became associated with the Apex Fish Company, where he was employed as outside manager or fish buyer and superintendent of traps. He remained with this company from 1905 to September, 1906. He then came to Seattle, engaging in the real estate business, in which he was very successful. In the spring of 1907 he again entered the employ of the Apex Fish Company in his former capacity, and in the fall of 1908 took charge of their entire business, i. e., fishing and canning. In the fall of 1909 Mr. Wakefield acquired 45 of the 500 shares of the capital stock of the Apex Fish Company, and in February, 1910, purchased the remaining 455 shares and became the sole owner of that company. He operated the Apex Fish Co. at Anacortes without further development until 1913, when he then converted it from a 2-line cannery into a 9-line cannery, increased in 1917 to 10 lines. This industry was systematically developed by the addition of fish traps, boats and modern equipment, until 1916, when he formed the company now well known as the Alaska Herring & Sardine Company. This company produces and packs a food product almost universally known as "Wakefield's Kippered Herring." During this year Mr. Wakefield became one of the founders of the Seaboard Bank which, in February, 1918, became a national bank and member of the Federal Reserve Bank. In December, 1916, he took an option on the J. L. Smiley Company's properties, which he sold in January, 1917, to Wilson & Company, meat packers of Chicago. In December, 1917, he effected a consolidation with Wilson & Company and the J. L. Smiley Company, the Alaska Herring & Sardine Company, the Lismiski Packing Company, and the Motor Ship "Apex" (built in Seattle by the National Shipbuilding Co. for Mr. Wakefield). Mr. Wakefield became president and general manager of the new company—now known as the Wilson Fisheries Company.

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