

Warren Cooper and Wraymond Geary of Stover, MO operated a frozen food locker in Versailles, MO from 1944-1952 in a building behind Coopers grocery store on east Newton Street, just west of the present-day Morgan County Justice Center.



Frigid Food Locker of Versailles was established in Versailles, MO in 1952, when Jack and Maxine Wood of Osceola, purchased the frozen food locker from Cooper and Geary. The business remained on east Newton Street with Wood adding a slaughter house on Clay Road, near the cemetery. Slaughtered beef and pork sides were then hung in a box truck on Clay Road and driven across town to be processed and frozen at Frigid Food Locker, along with poultry that was also slaughtered there. Butchers would cut off the chicken's heads, and scald them. Then they put them into a chicken plucking machine that had beaters that took the feathers off.

In 1960, Jack and Maxine Wood purchased a 2-story block building from Royce and Russie Moser, located on Highway 52 West (611 W Newton Street, home of Missouri Pride today), just east of Moser's Hatchery. The building was previously part of Moser's Versailles Ice Plant. This building had 6000 square ft on the main floor, 3500 square ft on the top floor and 1600 square ft in the basement.

Jack and Maxine gave the building a new stucco exterior finish and remodeled, added onto and redecorated the entire space. The chilling and aging room had capacity for 400 beef/pork quarters. The freezer provided 600 deep freeze lockers for rent, as most patrons did not have modern electric freezers. The majority of home refrigerators had only a small freezer compartment to hold ice cube trays, so additional freezer space was a commodity in high demand. The quick freeze room had a 5-ton capacity per day, which was utilized by customers when freezing garden and orchard produce, in addition to processed meats.



Jack and Maxine held their Grand Opening on Friday and Saturday, January 20-21, 1961, with over 1000 visitors attending and touring the new facility. They served coffee and donuts to the crowds and women received promotional potholders and egg separators while children received promotional balloons.



Jack and Maxine Wood, 1961
Grand Opening



Burl Cox, LC Hawkins, Sec MO Locker Assn,
Chester Marshall, VP MO Locker Assn, Nelson
Lee, Ruth Welty, Preston Hutchison, Jack Wood,
Harold Klein

Officials at the MO State Department of Health who inspected the new locker plant gave it a 100% rating, complimenting Wood on the arrangement and appearance, noting it one of the most modern locker plants in the state of Missouri.

Most of the beef sold at the locker in the 1960's was raised and fed locally by cattleman, Roy Gerber. A state-of-the-art smoke house and larder was included in the remodel, therefore hams and bacon were home-cured and lard was rendered for home cooking purposes. Customers could purchase beef and pork cuts, fresh or frozen.

Farmers brought their livestock to the locker plant live for customized butchering and processing.

Eventually, a refrigerated truck was purchased and a commercial route was created around the Lake of the Ozarks to area restaurants, nursing homes and campgrounds. Frigid Food Locker was known for its USDA Grade A Beef.

Jack and Maxine employed an average of 20-25 full-time employees as well as a few part-time employees the entire time they owned the business, making Frigid Food Locker one of the major employers in the area.



Tony Stephens, 13, grandson of Jack and
Maxine Wood, pictured here working with his
Grandma Maxine, processing meat.

Tony Stephens, Versailles, began a deer processing operation in the building in 1991, and he and his wife, Missy, purchased the building from them. Deer processing continues every year with Tony and Missy and their family, including grandchildren, running the operation, with much of the original equipment still being used today. 2026



Tony Stephens



Jack Wood and son LeRoy, 2000



Missy Stephens



The business today, 2026



Charlie, daughter of Tony and Missy



DJ and Zach, sons of Tony and Missy



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