

THE DAIRY BUSINESS IN HOPKINS

WRITTEN BY W. D. PARMELEE AUG. 10, 1952

Hopkins
Dairy
Willis Parmelee

The dairy business began in a very small way. Each farm would have from 1 to 5 or 6 cows, mostly for producing milk and butter for the family, and butter to take to the grocery store to pay, or help to pay, for the needed groceries for the family.

The milk was at first set in pans for from 24 to 36 hours, when the cream was then removed with the hand skimmer, a piece of tin slightly hollowed and perforated with holes to drain the milk through.

The cream was kept a few days until enough was gathered to make enough to churn, then this was placed in a dash churn, a rather tall jar with a wooden cover with a hole in the center for the handle of the dash to work through.

This dash was worked up and down, by hand, in the cream until it churned the cream into butter, then the butter milk was drained off and made feed for the pigs and calves, together with the skimmed milk that was left. Then the butter was placed in a wooden bowl called the butter bowl and was rinsed with cold water to remove the butter milk which was left in the butter, then the butter was worked with a small ladle made on purpose for the work, and called the butter ladle.

Thus the butter was worked and salted and made into rolls containing 2 or 3 pounds, and dotted off in various patterns and then was ready to be taken to the village grocery store to be traded for the family groceries.

Soon came the barrel churn, a sort of barrel with a tight cover, and set on a standard and turned with a handle or crank, or, if one was financially able to furnish it, a tread power run by a sheep or a dog could be used to turn the churn, as there was no electricity on the farm for power.

Most of the milk was produced in the summer as the cows were pastured in the slashings and it took all the feed to keep them through the winter, and the feed was mostly hay, as there was nothing known as silage or concentrates at that time.

Then as time went on, and more milk was produced there came the need of other ways of caring for the milk, and the cheese factory was built at the center of Hopkins Township, and was known as the Springdale Cheese Factory. Later it was run by Dick Redhead for several years and later by A. E. Chapman, and Charles Carpenter. Redhead was the cheese maker in 1876 when Wm. Linsley lost his arms, and helped take care of him.

Mr. Mort Hicks also was in care of it for many years and among others were Rev. Herbert McConnell, K. O. Baird, Reu McBride and Marvin Keenan.

In the early days of this factory milk was delivered twice each day morning and evening, the evening milk was set in a large vat and cooled by running water around, then skimmed in the morning and the cream churned into butter. The morning's milk was then mixed with the night's milk and all was made into cheese.

Then a state law came into effect, that cheese should be labeled either full cream cheese or skim milk cheese. The skimming was discontinued.

It was during the time of delivering milk twice daily that boys and men of the community would mount the horse drawn milk wagons and ride to the cheese factory to deliver the night's milk, then come back to the "Old Swimming Hole" for their recreation.

This factory known as the Springdale Cheese Factory caught fire in May, 1911, and burned to the ground, then a new one was built on nearly the same site and was run until Aug. 20, 1917, when it was sold to the Condensery. It is now used for a barn by Emil Pavlac.

As the dairy business grew there were other cheese factories built until there were 4 or 5 factories in the township. One was located one mile east of Hilliards, one at Hopkinsburg, managed by Mr. Mankin and later by Chas. Carpenter, and Springhill Cheese Factory, on the Jake Arndt farm, operated by Knowlton Edgell, and later moved to the north part of the village of Hopkins and operated by Fremont Miller.

In June, 1904, the cheese sold for 7.7 cents per lb. and milk brought 54-1/2 cents per cwt. of 3.4 milk.

In the nineties the Hilliards creamery was built and later the Hopkins creamery, so gradually they replaced the cheese factories, and in Aug. of 1916 the Wayland Condensery took over the last of the cheese factories, and the Hilliards creamery also gave way to Condensery, so the Hopkins Creamery was the only milk plant left in Hopkins township. This was operated as a Co-operative creamery for many years and finally sold. On June 3, 1919, this creamery blew up, causing the death of several people. It was repaired and still is running as a receiving plant.