

HISTORY OF CITY DAIRY YORKTON, SASK.

To my nearest recollection the following is the true history of the CITY DAIRY, which was located at 112 Laurier Ave., in Yorkton from the year 1924 to 1969. I will divide my story into two parts. The first part which leads up to the building of the plant in Yorkton in 1924 and the second part which carries on from 1924 until 1969.

Following the sale of the homestead, which was located 13 miles north of Sturgis and 7 miles east of Endeavor, my father Sydney Herbert Peet rented a farm from Mr. J. A. M. Patrick, a lawyer, at that time, in the town of Yorkton, Sask. and later a judge at Moosomin, Sask. I'm not certain of the exact year of the rental of the farm at Yorkton, but it must have been around 1920. It was located a mile or so west of the town, on the south side of the road that led to Regina and Saskatoon.

My recollection is a bit vague for the four years preceding the sale and moving into town in 1924. However, I do recollect some interesting happenings from time to time, but to put a date on them would only be guessing.

One of the arrangements, which came about during this period was the supplying of milk for our landlord Mr. Patrick, who drove out to our farm, or his farm, each evening to get his supply of milk for his family. At that time, I believe that he was one of about three people that owned a horseless carriage. The price of this milk was recorded and when the time came to pay the rent a settling by each party was in order.

Our relationship with the Patrick's was, or must have been close, as I remember feeding "Mary", a pet elk which Mr. Patrick had pastured in a pasture next to our house. As time progressed he actually built up a Patrick Park with a variety of wild animals. He fenced a large area west of our farm along a creek that was spring fed by placing a 8 ft. high fence around the entire park. This fence led from the road to Regina and Saskatoon to a mile south.

However, getting back to the milk business; it was during one of Mr. Patrick's calls to the farm that he suggested that my father bring the milk to him, rather than having him make the daily trips out.

This request was brought up time and time again, until finally my father put it to him in the following manner. If he could arrange to get enough people to make it worth while, he would agree to it. The figure of 20 Qt. sellers of milk was decided to be sufficient. On the following day Mr. Patrick gave my father a list of a number of friends, associates etc. in Yorkton, who agreed to his request. Thus, came about the first nucleus for the City Dairy as it was later called.

From here, one thing led to another; not really so different than to-day, but only on a far smaller scale. I remember making an all day trip with my father to Saltcoats to buy a Holstein cow in order to supplement our shortage of milk.

Even at that time, we were not alone as suppliers of milk for the people of Yorkton. There were a number of farmers who peddled milk under various arrangements. The biggest supplier was a farmer by the name of Howell, who had progressed to the point where he had a wagon built especially for handling milk. It had a centre walk-way with four covered boxes, two on each side and steps at the back for the driver to get on and off as his delivery required. He operated from the Ponohill District, a town about nine miles west of Yorkton.

It was when he sold out about 1922 that we purchased his wagon, some one or two cows and arranged to take over supplying his customers. Thus started the upward trend.

Instead of only having a hired man in spring and fall we hired a man the year 'round. A milk house was built in connection with the well-house on the top of an incline. A windmill was purchased from the town's carbin lamp works, taken apart piece by piece, and re assembled above the pump next to the well-house.

This was a real step forward as it took away the tedious chore of hand pumping water for our growing herd of cattle. Also, a collie dog was procured, and trained to bring the cows home, when ever required. One major improvement that we made was in the cementing of the cow barn, and further addition of an upright silo for the storing of cut sunflowers and corn. This was in the neighborhood of about 60 ft. high, and was a first in the area.

As time went on, and shortages of milk loomed we approached some other farmers, and had them bring their milk to our farm for bottling and delivery.

Mr. Harry Wilkenson was one of the larger suppliers at that time, and it became apparent that we had to make some changes, as the milk end was using up most of our working time while leaving the farm short handed. It was at this time, after my father had made a trip to Ontario, that he had the idea of building a pasturizing plant in Yorkton.

The plant was constructed of wood. It was about the size of a double garage. The floor was cemented and a small basement for an upright boiler to make steam and for heating was built. An ice well was constructed next to this for a place to keep the milk cool after bottling and before delivering.

The dairy kept my father and whole family busy in every way. He would be up early each morning and with my brother and myself we covered the town with milk before breakfast, and then went to school.

My father did the receiving and pasturizing of the milk that was brought in from the farms. Mr. Hamilton along with Mr. Wilkenson were our main suppliers. Mr. Hamilton was the purchaser of our former dairy herd and new renter of the Patrick farm.

Mr. Pat Stout and the W. D. Dunlop Dairy were the next acquisitions. They stopped delivering and brought us their milk each day in the raw stage. Soon followed the Cruikshanks and Vanderburgs. They were also doing some delivery of milk, but it was becoming apparent that with our early morning delivery, they were being left out of the picture more and more.

Things went along reasonably well for a number of years. We made the old Model T into a truck for delivery. I was eleven or twelve when this happened, but driver licenses were never heard of at that time. In fact it was when I was 16 that they were first required, and given out by Mr. Wally Markham of Wally's Service Station. Needless to say I had no problem obtaining one as I had been gasing up at his station for years.

In 1929, we bought a new Chevrolet car and the whole family took a two month holiday to Ontario. It was during this period that we were practically put out of business. The man and his wife that were to deliver milk for us decided that they would go into business for themselves. They started in a garage behind their own house and although they did not pasturize the milk they had contact with all of our customers.

Then came the crash of 1929, and the beginning of hard times. Milk prices in the next year or two went as low as 5¢ per quart for raw milk. We handled both pasturized and raw milk. The pasturized milk always sold for 1¢ more. This was perhaps the one thing that gave us an edge, but as it was not compulsory, the raw milk was cheaper, and people were poor, it became a tough bargaining point.

It was during this period that we tried our hand at growing mushrooms, which didn't pan out, and later still into the rubber mat business. We purchased old tires for 5¢ each and with some cutting tools, which were brought from Chicago, we went into a side business of manufacturing mats. This was the one thing that financed us during the 30's.

It was during the 30's that the Sask. Co-op Creamery, under the management of Mr. Walter Brown deviated from butter making by going into the fluid milk business. This came about perhaps at our lowest point financially, but with it also came the establishment of the Milk Control Board, under Mr. B. A. Cook. In no time milk was selling at 8¢ a quart. Also about that time two university graduates opened up a dairy farm south of Yorkton.

York Farms Dairy was the name and they flourished for a few years. After about four years they approached us and asked if we would buy them out. The two had split up, and were each going their own way. Other things were also happening.

Mr. Wilkenson left us as a supplier to send his milk to the Sask. Co-op Creamery. I understand that he was a deligate with them at that time. This in itself was quite a shock, but also Mr. Hamilton decided to go into selling milk. With these two suppliers gone we were forced to go shopping for a supply. It was not too difficult, and soon Mr. Moynes, Mr. Draper, Albert Irwin, Fred Monty and Alex Rousey were new shippers, and supplying milk and cream to the City Dairy.

The city now had two pasturizing plants and competition became keener. Other small farm dairies stopped delivering, and either came into the fold of supplying raw milk to one of the two plants, or going out of cattle altogether. The Sigardson Dairy and Wilcox Dairy, were two that we took over during the late 1930's. At one time Yorkton had fourteen dairy farmers delivering milk.

The war years were something else, when it came to running a dairy. My brother joined the army, my sister the wrens and I went into the Air Force. This left father to run a business with virtually little family help. However, my other sister Mrs. Rena Ferguson along with Dad and Mother carried on. It was during this period, when help was hard to get that we went out of Sunday delivery of milk.

Mr. Dean, then Manager of the Sask. Co-op Creamery was not too sure that it would be accepted, but had the approval of his head office, to give it a try. It was a good move, and as far as I know was the first city in Canada outside of the city of Ottawa to not deliver milk on Sundays.

During the war years the two Yorkton Dairies, worked together in many ways. Airport contracts were rotated month about, and due to the volume of milk required shippers were supplying the Sask. Co-op Creamery one month and the City Dairy the next. Girls were hired by both companies to help deliver milk from house to house, and also for work within the plant, because of the shortage of men.

We even ventured into supplying eggs and Ice Cream for the Yorkton, Dafoe and Nepawa Airports. The eggs were purchased from L. T. Clark, who was manager of the Foam Lake Burns Creamery, before the change went through. Our Ice Cream Palm Brand was being drawn from the Burns Creamery at Canora, then managed by Mr. Robinson. Mr. Joe Naplin managed the City Dairy for a few of the war years, but in 1946 management of the City Dairy was changed to myself, and operated in this manner until 1953. At which time, I officially purchased it and carried on until we amalgamated in 1969.

Shortly following 1946, the White Sand River Dairy, the last remaining raw milk retail supplier in Yorkton, was purchased by the City Dairy.

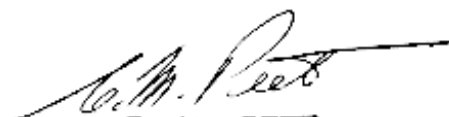
Many changes were made during the years 1946 - 1969. A new plant was built in 1948, home delivery changed from horses to trucks; smaller towns were requiring milk services; bottles were replaced

with milk cartons; raw milk previously delivered to the dairy, was now being picked up on the farm by bulk tanks; milk vending machines became necessary in schools. Indeed it was a time of change.

The following is a list of names of people that were at one time or another involved as suppliers of milk or cream to the City Dairy, Yorkton, Sask.:-

Mr. Howell	Mr. Alex Rousey
Mr. Harry Wilkinson	Mrs. Wilcox
Mr. Pat Stout	Mr. Wilfred Wilcox
Mr. Hamilton	Mr. Tom Kuryluk
Mr. Bert Venton	Mr. Michal
Mr. Cruikshank	Mr. Art Buifett
Mr. Vanderburg	The Huber Brothers
Mr. Roy Moynes	Mr. Bill Miller
Mr. Frank Draper	Mr. Steve Kramer
Mr. Albert Irwin	Mr. Sam Kramer
Mr. Allan Irwin	Mr. Wm. Harris
Mr. Fred Monty	Mr. Blake Harris
Miss Kay Wrubleskie	Mr. Douglas
Mr. John Wolfe	Mrs. Russell
Mr. Ken Wolfe	Mr. Bill Martel
Mr. August Bittner	Mr. John Miller
Mr. Irving Bittner	Mr. Rathgeber
Mr. Adolf Bittner	Mr. I. Shindle
Mr. Art Ford	Mr. Jack Vandermeulen
Reglin Brothers	Mr. Alex Blommaert
McHutt & Graham	Mr. A. Klause
Mr. Nick Woloschuk	Mr. Norman Miller
Mr. Pete Woloschuk	Mr. Trowell
Mr. Dobko	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Albert Guse	Mr. Nehring
Mr. Wm. Jonat	Mr. Tom Stewart
Mr. Gene Britton	Mr. Roly Gabert
Mr. Carl Knodal	Mr. Wm. Britton
Mr. Keilback	Mr. Fink
Mr. W. D. Dunlop	Mr. Hipsley
Mr. Grunert	Mr. Bob Ford

If some name are missed in the above list, and they will be, please accept my apologies as it was not intended.


C. M. PEET