

What is it?

This is an egg scale. Evelyn Morgan owns this particular egg scale. It belonged to her mother Nellie Medlin. An egg would be put in the two little round things on one end and the ring would be slid along the bar to find the correct weight. Evelyn remembers that her mother sold eggs locally to Lockridge Hatchery and others. She used the scale to weigh and grade eggs. At one time Nellie owned 200-250 hens. Evelyn believes Nellie sold eggs from about 1945 until 1954. She would buy a specific kind of hens (White Leghorns) from Lockridge, and she was paid more for the larger eggs for hatching.

The following is from <https://www.farmcollector.com/equipment/weighing-in-on-egg-scales/> Grading of eggs by weight began about 1900 as a way of selecting the ideal size egg for hatching purposes. Early "egg graders" were preset to select eggs of a certain weight. During World War I, the U.S. War Department bought eggs in large quantities and paid for them on the basis of size, which was determined by weight. Since poultry farmers were paid a premium for graded eggs, i.e., eggs that were sorted by size, World War I created an immediate market for "egg scales." Farmers graded eggs to sell to retailers as a source of cash, thus perpetuating the need for egg scales. World War II created the greatest single demand for egg scales as the U.S. War Department bought eggs in huge quantities to feed the troops overseas. Most egg scales were invented and manufactured between 1920 and 1940.

You may see this item at the Putnam County Historical Society Museum, 201 South 16th Street, Unionville, MO 63565. We will be open from 9-11 am on Saturday mornings during the Farmer's Market. See you there!