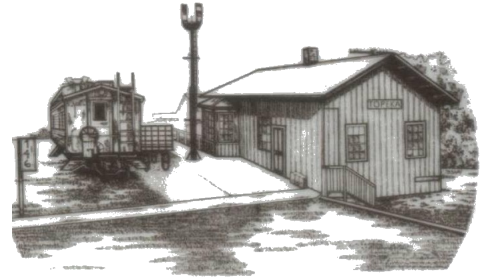




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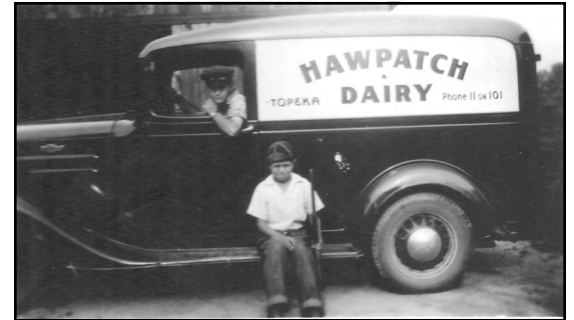
Topeka Area Historical Society

Number 4

The Hawpatch Dairy and Dairy Bar

It all sort of just happened. One thing led to another as times changed, and Topeka ended up with its own milk processing and bottling plant. According to Galen Yoder, whose father Edwin purchased the delivery route from his son-in-law, it was the wrong time to be in the dairy and milk bottling business. In spite of the challenges, the Hawpatch Dairy was one of the first in the area to introduce homogenized milk. While the changing marketplace would eventually force the Yoders to sell, their Hawpatch Dairy set a standard of innovation in the emerging dairy industry. They not only introduced homogenized milk but in the 1950s were the first in the area to offer soft-serve ice cream.

In the early days of Topeka, many people living on the edge of town would have a barn for their horse and a milk cow. Writing for the Topeka Area Historical Society's book, "Celebrating a Century 1893-1993", Galen L. Yoder says that as late as the early 1940s this was still common. But times were changing and many people began to rely on farms close to town or friends who had a family cow. People would take their containers to a farm and get milk. One such farm was the Rollin Kent farm, less than a mile north of Topeka on the west side of the road. Galen writes that sometime in the 1920s, a family named Ulrey, who were living on the Kent farm, began bottling milk and delivering it house to house in town. The Wilson Mishlers moved to the Kent farm in the 1930s and continued the deliveries.



Galen Yoder at the wheel

Early in the morning the Kent & Mishler horse-drawn milk wagon could be seen making deliveries so the town's people could have fresh milk for breakfast. Galen recalls that the Mishlers had a son who was still in high school. The daily route was such that when the delivery route was done he would go to the school, wrap the horse's reins around its neck, and the horse went home on its own while he attended classes. This ended in 1938 when the Mishlers moved off the Kent farm.

The Seagly Brothers had a grocery and hardware store in Topeka in what is now the Topeka Pharmacy. The Seaglys persuaded a young man by the name of DeWayne Johns was working for them to start driving to Middlebury every morning to pick up milk and cream at Pletcher's Dairy. DeWayne worked part time for the Seaglys but the delivery route was his. Seven days a week he made the morning run to pick up milk and cream so it could be delivered door to door between 7:00 and 7:30 am. In 1938, DeWayne married Galen's sister Gladys and a year later they decided to move to DeWayne's father's farm three miles south of Topeka. In 1939, Edwin J. Yoder bought the delivery route from his new son-in-law and called it the Hawpatch Dairy. But, Sunday deliveries were a problem.

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Edwin J. Yoder had been ordained as a minister in at the Maple Grove Amish Mennonite Church in Topeka in 1925. In 1935, he was ordained as a bishop. Sunday deliveries were out of the question. For a short period of time he made both early morning and late evening deliveries on Saturdays. As a freshman at Topeka High School in 1940, Galen had his own herd of 12 cows. He recalls being up every morning by 4 am to milk while his father made the trip to Middlebury for milk and cream. Breakfast was always a little after 6 am and deliverers had to be made by 7 am so people had milk to drink. Edwin would drive and

Continued on page 2

Hawpatch Dairy *continued*

Galen ran to the doors. “There was so much work to be done,” Galen says, “I never had the chance to be in high school sports and things like that. But I guess it was good for me because I learned how to work.”

A couple of years later the Yoders purchased a 1936 Chevy panel truck that had been used to deliver ice. But World War II brought a whole new set of challenges.



Gas rationing and the rationing of tires forced deliveries to only 3 days a week. Fortunately most commercial sold milk was being pasteurized and people had ice boxes.

It was during these years (1944-45) that Galen attended two winter terms at Purdue University to study dairy manufacturing. He worked in Purdue’s processing plant. In 1945 construction began on a concrete block building which stood on the family farm on South Main Street.

Hawpatch Dairy opened its milk processing and bottling plant in 1946. There they bottled both cream line milk and homogenized milk. They had the first homogenizer in the area. The process used over 4,000 pounds of pressure to keep the milk from separating. While pasteurization and homogenization kept the milk fresh longer and improved the taste, people were slow to accept the new technology because they couldn’t see the cream rising to the top.

Cream had always been a valuable commodity. In fact many farmers separated their milk right at the farm, sold the cream, made butter and fed the skimmed milk to the pigs. Cream was so valuable that for a time it was packed in ice and shipped by train to Buffalo, New York, from right here in Topeka.

In 1948, Hawpatch Dairy introduced ice cream to their customers. Two years later Erman Yoder, after building a new gas station and garage, remodeled part of the original station especially for this new venture. Galen and his wife Esther opened the Hawpatch Dairy Bar just south of the center of town. It was the first soft-serve, or frozen custard as it was called, to be served in the area.

Opening mid-morning, Galen says they never intended to serve meals. But before long it had become a full service restaurant.

Esther operated the dairy bar and was the main

cook while Galen oversaw both businesses. “Needless to say, we were having kids at the same time,” Galen noted.

Around 1952, Galen purchased his father’s remaining shares of the business. Hawpatch Dairy had grown from a one car delivery route to six milk routes and several ice cream routes. Hawpatch was now serving Millersburg, Shippshewana, Wolcottville, Rome City and all the lakes east of Topeka. Galen was a licensed milk tester for the butter fat content by this time. Farmers were paid for their milk based on the percent of butter fat. Floyd “Curley” Lambright was in charge of the processing. But, big changes were coming as more and more people were buying their dairy products at the store. Paper milk cartons were replacing the glass bottle. Home delivery was quickly becoming a thing of the past.

In that same year the bottling operations were discontinued while ice cream production was expanded. It was a hard time for the dairy processing industry. In Indiana 105 small dairies closed. The Dairy Bar Restaurant was sold to Ed & Beulah Shelly and the ice cream business was moved back to the dairy.

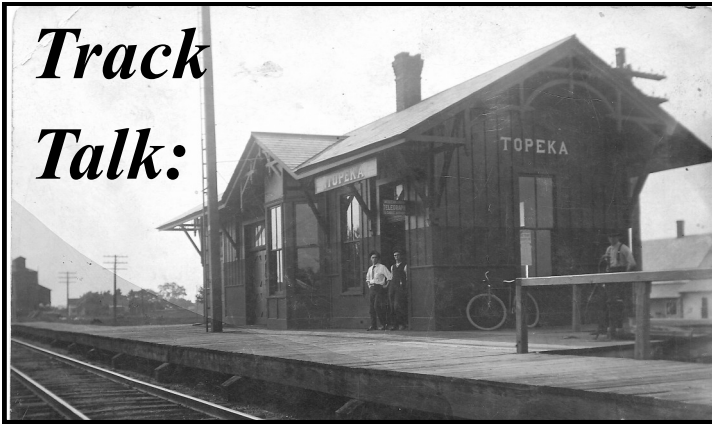
In 1953, Yoder sold the Hawpatch Dairy to Goshen Farms Dairy. They operated the Topeka plant for a short period of time before moving everything to Goshen. Galen says that within a year they were begging him to take the dairy back because they were struggling financially and didn’t want to pay the last half of the sale price. But Galen & Esther were back on the farm and had purchased cows. And to quote Galen, “We were back on the utter end”. So ended the chapter on the Hawpatch Dairy in the annals of Topeka history.



TAHS Quiz

1. Who convinced DeWayne Johns to start delivering milk in Topeka?
2. When Galen Yoder was a freshman at Topeka High School how many cows did he have?
3. When cream was being shipped by rail from Topeka, where was it taken?
4. Who purchased the Hawpatch Dairy Bar?
5. Name the young man Jonathan J. Yoder helped?

Track Talk:



Topeka Students Meet Mr. Lincoln



Thanks to the generosity of our corporate sponsors, the Topeka Area Historical Society was able to make it possible for Fritz Klein, aka President Abraham Lincoln, to make a special appearance at the Topeka Elementary School on November 15th at no cost to the school.

That evening over 120 people enjoyed Dinner with Mr. Lincoln in the historic Honeyville School which is now home to Eden Worship Center.

“How many quarts of milk did you say?”

Galen Yoder has many stories from his days at Hawpatch Dairy. One of the funniest is about the lady in town who always had one quart of milk delivered three times a week.

One day when Galen was delivering the quart of milk he found a note saying she wanted 96 quarts. Thinking that to be very strange he knocked on the door so he could talk with the lady to make sure the order was correct.

When the door opened Galen said, “This note says you want 96 quarts, is that right?” “Yes,” responded the lady.

“What are you going to do with 96 quarts of milk.....take a bath?”, he inquired. “Yes,” she said.

“Well, do you want it pasteurized?” he asked. “No,” she said, “just up to my neck!”

HG



Schedule of Events:

January 17, 2012 - Topeka Library - 6:30 pm

Program: “*The Barlow Circus*”



Victor Baird will be with us to present a fascinating PowerPoint about the circus that wintered in South Milford and preformed in Topeka in the early 1900s.

March 20, 2012

Program: (Tentative)

“*Shipshewana Historical Society’s Story*”



- Answers:
- 1) The Seagly Brothers
 - 2) twelve
 - 3) Buffalo, New York
 - 4) Ed & Beulah Shelly
 - 5) Jacob Straus

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Topeka Area Historical Society

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Hawpatch History Detectives

Investigative Report

Act of Kindness Helps 4th Generation

It was about 1846, when Jonathan J. Yoder came to the Hawpatch. One day a man with all his earthly belongings wrapped up in a large piece of cloth tied to the end of a stick and slung over his shoulder came to Yoder's farm.

"I want to stay in your barn tonight," the man said.

"No, you can't stay in my barn" responded Yoder, "but I have a bed in my house."

In fact, the man stayed with them for a period of time. Just how long is not clear. But Jonathan helped him get a horse and a wagon and the man started buying and selling things around the community. The man was Jacob Straus who became a successful banker in Ligonier and who made a large donation for the construction of Sycamore Hall.

Years later Straus came to Yoder and said, "The farm next to you is coming up for sale and you need it for your son." Yoder said, "I don't have the money." "Yes you do," said Straus, "I'll give it to you". "You're a good farmer and I know you'll pay me back." He bought the farm and repaid the loan. Yoder was able to buy farms for each of his sons.

When Jonathan's great grandson, Galen, needed to borrow money to buy a dairy herd, the Topeka bank was reluctant to give him any money up front. Galen's father, Bishop Edwin J. Yoder, took him to Ligonier where he still had business connections. The Ligonier banker said, "When you find the cattle you want write the check on your bank, tell me how much it is and we'll put the money in your bank."

Jonathan's kindness to Jacob Straus almost 100 years earlier had not been forgotten.

Fire on the Buggy Wheels

Al & Mary Bontrager wrote the following account for a class on "Folk Stories" they were attending.

My mother told this story to me many years ago. During the years around the early 1900's, what is now State Road 5 going south from Shipshewana, was an unpaved road. It went along the west side of a swamp, located just about a mile east of Honeyville. My father was born and lived about a mile west of the big swamp. When he and my mother were dating they traveled along this stretch of road often.

Many times as people passed along that way at night what appeared to be balls of fire would attach themselves to the buggy wheels and stay there until the swamp was passed. It was quite frightening. What could cause those balls of light and were there ghosts present? She didn't think anyone was ever hurt by them, just scared. The buggy wheels didn't appear to be damaged.

What could have caused this? Possibly swamp gas (methane) coming from the swamp, was ignited by the steel wheels of the buggies hitting the stones on the gravel. The balls of fire on the wheels continued with the buggy the length of the swamp. About that time the swamp was drained and the muck soil was used for growing mint. Now other crops are grown. The fire on the buggy wheels ceased after the swamp was drained.

There is now a church building, New Life Community Church, built on the north side of the swamp. It has a retention pond because of the low level of the land. The ditch is still along State Road 5, beginning south of the road that goes into Emma. (Editors note: The church is New Life Fellowship)

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