

Jerry McKelvy's
WAY BACK WHEN
March, 2024

MILK, CREAM, BUTTER, AND RELATED STUFF

I grew up on a farm and we got our milk straight from the cow. I did very little milking myself, but I do remember churning milk to make butter. I also remember gallon jugs of milk in our old Kelvinator refrigerator that had a thick layer of cream on top. It definitely was not 2% milk. Our milk wasn't pasteurized or homogenized, but it was strained through a cloth to remove any impurities. I wasn't involved in making butter other than taking my turn churning. My main chore was to go over in the field every day, round up the cows, and get them headed for the barn.

Nevada County had a lot of farm families back in the old days. Every family living on a farm had some cows to provide milk for the family, some hogs to be slaughtered for meat, and chickens to provide eggs and an occasional chicken dinner.

The Prescott Creamery and Cheese Factory

In 1890, Prescott had a creamery and cheese factory. The stockholders met and decided to buy a parcel of land a little over two acres for \$225. The site selected was the former location of the Willingham slaughter pen. Construction of the building began in October, 1890, and was expected to be completed in 90 days. The building was 30 x 52 feet and was a two-story building. The lower floor contained an office, a milk receiving room, a manufacturing room, a cold storage room, an ice room, and an office. The upper floor was used for curing the cheese and storage.

Some of the men involved in this enterprise were T. W. Hays, J. M. Pittman, B. H. Logan, A. E. Stainton, J. C. Trevillion, Alfred Francisco, L. C. Steele, Alfred Aburrow, W. J. Formby, G. W. Gatlin, W. B. Waller, and Ed Gee.

The main problem was to convince enough farmers to agree to provide milk to the business to make the company profitable. By January, 1891, 300 to 400 cows had been signed up to provide the milk and it was opened for business on April 1, 1891. The farmers were paid a certain amount per pound for the milk delivered to the business. Some claimed they could make more money selling milk than raising cotton. A farmer with 25 cows averaging two gallons per day per cow would bring in \$100 per month which was pretty good for 1891.

The Prescott Creamery and Cheese Factory only operated for a few months until it ceased operation in August, 1891 due to not enough milk coming in to the business. City officials and the stockholders were disappointed that this business failed so soon.

Another Option for Farmers

There was still a demand for the cream, so in 1915, a meeting was held and any Nevada County resident who had a cow was invited to attend, especially those within a

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ten-mile radius of Prescott. A receiving station was to be set up so that farmers could bring their cream to that location and receive payment. The cream would then be shipped to dairies in other cities. Representatives would also be at the meeting showing different types of cream separators available to separate the cream from the milk.

I never saw a cream separator being used, but we had two types at our farm. I won't try to explain how they worked, but it was a necessary piece of equipment on many farms, especially for those farmers who wanted to sell their cream. After the cream was separated from the milk, the skimmed milk was usually fed to the hogs.



Left: -- Gravity Type Cream Separator. We had this at our farm, but I never saw it being used. As I understand it, you could look through the glass on the side to see when the cream rose to the top and there is a spigot at the bottom.

Right—All that's left of our hand-operated cream separator. Several parts are missing. I don't remember this being used at our farm.



It was not until 1921 that the plan was put into effect in Nevada County to have a shipping station where farmers could bring their cream to sell. The Prescott Hardware was selected as the receiving station. Minor Gordon was put in charge of the station and the cream was shipped two days each week to various places. A large number of farmers signed up to participate in the program. The cream was usually shipped to the Terry Dairy in Little Rock which paid 27 cents per pound for the cream and the empty milk cans were returned to Prescott.

An expert came to Prescott in June, 1921 to give advice to farmers on how to properly ship their cream. The milk must be cooled as soon as it was drawn from the cow. It was to be stirred twice each day after being poured into the metal milk cans. Farmers were told to deliver their cream before it got too sour. They were told to wrap a blanket around the can before starting for the shipping station and to keep the cans from being exposed to the hot sun.

The amount shipped from the Prescott station was reported in the newspaper, usually ranging from 60 to 130 gallons for each shipment. I don't have access to newspapers

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after 1921, but I think this method of shipping cream continued on several years. Farmers continued to ship cream until at least the 1930s. It was reported that the FFA boys at the Bluff City school assisted farmers in shipping cream in 1932.

OTHER MILK-RELATED PHOTOS



Left— This container was used to keep milk cold before the days of refrigeration. Milk was put into the container and butter in the small bowl which set inside over the milk. The lid was put on and the whole thing was let down into the well to keep the milk and butter cold.



Right-- About 40 years ago when I was working for a timber company, I found this metal can

that had been dumped in the woods with other trash. I think it's a small milk can. The lid was missing. It is 14 inches tall and holds about 3 gallons.



I was excited to find this old half gallon milk bottle one day while working around an old home place in Nevada County near Bodcaw. The wording on the side says "THIS BOTTLE TO BE WASHED AND RETURNED. NOT TO BE BOUGHT OR SOLD". The bottle had been out in the woods so long that it had started to change color—sort of a purplish tinge.

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Milk once came in glass bottles of various sizes. We have several of these.



We don't have the butter churn any more, but we do still have the dasher used to churn the butter. All you had to do was sit in a chair beside the churn and move the dasher up and down until it was ready. I suppose you could read while churning to help pass the time.



One of several different types of butter molds. Some were rectangular. This one has a pretty design on the bottom of the plunger inside the mold. When the butter was pushed out of the mold it left a nice hunk of butter with a pretty design on top.



Small half-pint glass bottles. Milk supplied to schools once came in glass bottles similar to these.

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MIDDLE NAMES

Middle names started to become popular after 1800, and by the time of the Civil War, they were becoming even more popular. According to the Census Bureau, only 37% of the population had a middle name in 1911. Today, about 80% have a middle name and 11% have two or more middle names. Full names are normally only used on legal documents. Some people use their first name and middle initial as their legal signature. Some men use their first initial and full middle name such as J. William Fulbright and J. Edgar Hoover. Some people get stuck with a nickname early in life and it is only when we read their obituary that we learn their full name.

Many of our presidents did not have a middle name. Here is a list:

George Washington	Martin Van Buren	Abraham Lincoln
John Adams	John Tyler	Andrew Johnson
Thomas Jefferson	Zachery Taylor	James Garfield
James Madison	Millard Fillmore	Benjamin Harrison
James Monroe	Franklin Pierce	William McKinley
Andrew Jackson	James Buchanan	Theodore Roosevelt

Some presidents used an initial in their name that didn't stand for anything—Ulysses S. Grant, Harry S. Truman, and Franklin K. Pierce.

Four of our presidents preferred to be called by their middle name---Stephen Grover Cleveland, Hiram Ulysses Grant, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, and John Calvin Coolidge.

Here are the full names of those presidents who had a middle name:

John <u>Quincy</u> Adams	Dwight <u>David</u>	George <u>Walker</u> Bush Jr.
William <u>Henry</u> Harrison	Eisenhower	Barak <u>Hussein</u> Obama
James <u>Knox</u> Polk	John <u>Fitzgerald</u>	Donald <u>John</u> Trump
Rutherford <u>Brichard</u>	Kennedy	Joseph <u>Robinette</u> Biden
Hayes	Lyndon <u>Baines</u> Johnson	Jr.
Chester <u>Alan</u> Arthur	Richard <u>Milhous</u> Nixon	
William <u>Howard</u> Taft	Gerald <u>Rudolph</u> Ford	
Warren <u>Gamaliel</u>	James <u>Earl</u> Carter	
Harding	Ronald <u>Wilson</u> Reagan	
Herbert <u>Clark</u> Hoover	George <u>Herbert Walker</u>	
Franklin <u>Delano</u>	Bush	
Roosevelt	William <u>Jefferson</u> Clinton	

Some presidents are better known with a shortened version of their actual names such as Abe Lincoln, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton, and Joe Biden.

Some presidents had nicknames—Old Hickory (Andrew Jackson), His Obstinacy (Grover Cleveland), The Peanut Farmer (Jimmy Carter), The Great Communicator (Ronald Reagan), Poppy (George H. W. Bush), Bubba (Bill Clinton), Dubya (George W.

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Bush), No Drama Obama (Barak Obama), Rutherfraud (Rutherford Hayes), Unconditional Surrender (Ulysses Grant), Honest Abe (Abraham Lincoln), Old Buck (James Buchanan), Little Jemmy (James Madison).

Many of our fathers and grandfathers seemed to prefer using only their initials instead of their given names. This makes it more difficult for genealogists who have to figure out the actual names. I came across an obituary of a lady buried at Bluff City Cemetery who died in 1934. Instead of giving the names it read "she is survived by 8 sons, R. B., E. T., T. H., R. C., R. E., B. N., P. E., and A. C. I know of one man still living who goes by the initials R. J. I have no idea what his actual name is.

HISTORY TRIVIA QUESTIONS

U. S. History

1. Who was president during the Cuban missile crisis?
2. What was the name of the ship that brought the Pilgrims to America?
3. What name is given to the first ten amendments to the U. S. constitution?
4. Which Founding Father was author of the Declaration of Independence and became the third president of the United States?
5. Who was president for only one month?

Arkansas History

6. What is the state insect of Arkansas?
7. How many counties are in Arkansas?
8. What state borders Arkansas on the north?
9. What river is the eastern border of Arkansas?
10. Hattie Caraway of Arkansas was the first woman to serve in what role?

Answers:

- | |
|---------------------------|
| 1. John F. Kennedy |
| 2. Mayflower |
| 3. Bill of Rights |
| 4. Thomas Jefferson |
| 5. William Henry Harrison |
| 6. honey bee |
| 7. 75 |
| 8. Missouri |
| 9. Mississippi |
| 10. U. S. senator |

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Homage to My Grandparents – by Don Mathis

In 1990, most of my Mathis kin met in Camden, Arkansas, for a homecoming. It was to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Alice Hearnberger Mathis and to get together like the we did 30 years earlier. I made a shrine for the family reunion, an altar of sorts, but I dared not call it that (too many devout Arkansas Baptists might be offended). I called it an Homage to my Grandparents – and the items on the table triggered a thousand memories.

The Rook Widow

“Rook” and “Old Maid” were the only card games allowed in Grandma’s house; never the face cards (jack, queen, king) – those were the ‘Devil’s Tools’ (so called for their association with gambling and fortune-telling). “Rook” is a bidding game, but the only thing we wagered were points. “The Rook might be in the widow,” was an adage we learned early. And Grandma was a widow, an Old Maid, for almost 16 years.

Abe Lincoln

Grandma shared Abraham Lincoln’s birthday, and in my juvenile mind, they were from the same era. In actuality, Grandma and Dwight Eisenhower were born the same year. Grandma and Abe were, however, both noble and honest people. When Grandma visited our family in Washington, D.C., in the mid-60s, we took her to the Lincoln Memorial. We read the words on the wall. And now, when I think of Lincoln’s words about justice and compassion, I think of Grandma.

Candle and Coat-Hanger

This ceramic gas heater grill reminds me of Grandpa and Grandma’s house. Every Christmas was like that heater; warm, friendly, and bright. The Camden Santa (Grandma) would create a gift for all of us at Christmas; she made all of us feel special. She crafted coat-hangers one year. Thank you, Camden Santa!

Patchwork Quilt

America has a love affair with patchwork quilts. How many of you have one of Grandma’s quilts in a chest at home? Is it hillbilly culture? Folk art? Homespun legacy? This one is a “Nine Patch Chain.” Some of you may recognize a patch or two.

Grandpa’s Tie

Grandma gave me this tie in 1976, shortly before she died. She said it was Paw’s tie. “See, here’s where I shortened it for him. He always liked them that way.” The tie is ‘hand painted,’ according to the stamp on the back. It shows a pastoral scene, something I believe Walter and Alice Mathis both liked.

Porcelain Coach with Horses

I used to believe this coach with horses was a ‘Mathis Thing.’ There was one in Grandma’s house, our house, Aunt Rose’s house, Uncle George’s – everybody had one. All of us kids would pick it up (everybody scared we would break it), and look in the windows, stick our fingers in there. It was proof, to my ten-year-old mind, that we descended from royalty. Uncle Winford explained later that he and Aunt Elsie gifted the porcelain figurines to everyone one year, and they were all a little bit different.

Photographs

In 1906, President Teddy Roosevelt received the Nobel Prize for bringing peace to Japan and Russia, Congress passed the Pure Food and Drug Act, and San Francisco had a big earthquake and fire. And sweet little sixteen Alice Hearnberger sat for her portrait. She married the next year.

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The large picture is my grandparents' 50th wedding anniversary. Some say I was too young, but I remember being there. In the 1940s, Maw and Paw sent the framed picture to my dad who was away in the Navy.

Checker Board

Checkers were a big game at my grandparents' home. I remember the first time I beat Grandma. Grandpa called her away from the game for a few minutes – and when she came back, I won. She accused me of cheating. She taught me to play the game but she didn't teach me how to cheat. I beat her fair and square. Are you listening, Grandma? She taught me well. Well, checkers anyway. And I'm still good! I'll take on any of y'all.

This Here's the Bathroom

A sign like this once hung on the bathroom door at 226 California Avenue in Camden. Grandpa and Grandma were of the generation that knew quite well the outhouse trail. Maybe that is why they could still poke fun at their pride of indoor plumbing as late as 1958.

Letter, February 19, 1976

Dear Don, Thanks for the lovely card I received from you. It's wonderful to have Grand Children to love & have on a special B.day like ole Abe's & mine. Your Aunt Rose and Fred came up to celebrate with me. My church had a big Valentine Banquet that nite of my B.day. 250 people were there, food & entertainment were great. Weather was good all week. The sweetest gift of all was some home-made candy. Hadn't had that in years. Don't you think it would be sweet if you had some? Love you (signed) Ma Mathis

Hearing Aid

Grandpa had a hearing aid, the latest in 1930's tube technology. And according to family lore... He was a bill collector for a while back in the Great Depression. And when his 'client' began to explain why he didn't have the payment, Grandpa would interrupt and say, "Excuse me, I'm going to turn down my hearing aid now. Let me know when you're finished with your story."

Well, I'm finished with my story. Nudge your father, everybody, tell him he can turn up his hearing aid now. I love you all! I love Grandma and Grandpa too! May their lives continue to influence us all.

