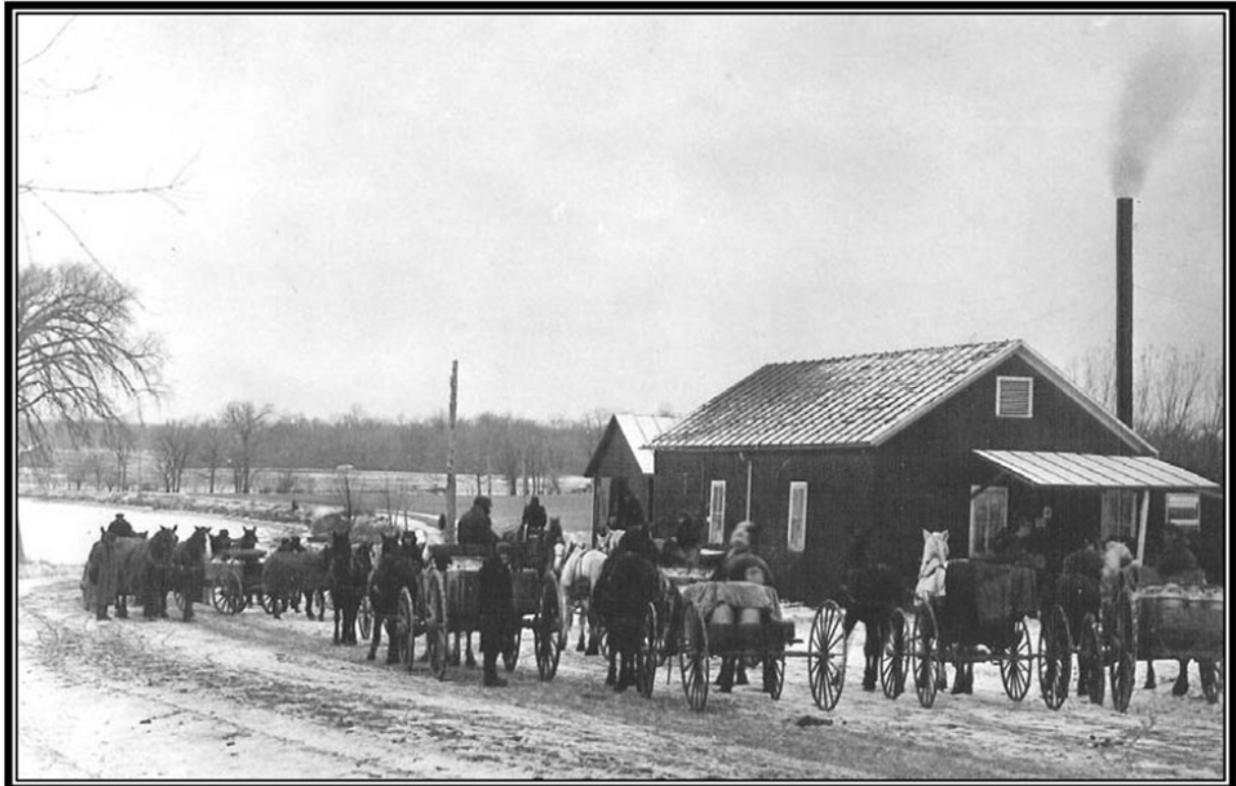


Pavučina Corner – By Tony Kadlec
THE SILVER LAKE CREAMERY PART 1 OF 3

Many of us who pass by the old Silver Lake Creamery, do so without giving it much thought to what a vital part it once played in the history of our community. Now defunct, the old creamery building sits quietly on the northwest corner of Lane Avenue and West Main Street, serving as a storage building for its private owner.

This past summer my dad and I drove by the creamery and noticed that the door was open and the owner was present. He was nice enough to let us walk through this old building and to take some pictures of the inside and to reflect on its history.



Historic photos of the Original Silver Lake Creamery, Circa 1886

According to the History of McLeod County (1917) and the Silver Lake Centennial Book, "The Silver Lake Creamery...was organized in 1897 by John Kasper, Sr., Joseph Hager, and Frank Navratil. In 1914 the old building was replaced, at which time George Friauf became president; Victor Shotke, secretary and

manager; and Joe Teply, treasurer. John Kasper, Anton Trutna and John Kurtz were the directors. Starting in April, 1915, John N. Peterson was manager and butter maker. He received 3,482,875 pounds of milk, the amount of butterfat was 133,627 pounds, which earned \$27,423.12 for the 176 patrons, who had an average of six cows each. The Creamery closed in 1968.”



Memories of the Silver Lake Creamery:

Jerome Kadlec (son of Joe and Rose), Silver Lake High School class of 1955, remembers his trips hauling milk into town with his grandpa Albin and the family’s bearskin rug that was brought along on especially cold winter days, to keep the cans of milk warm. When the rear wheel drive pickup couldn’t make it through the deep snow or up the icy ‘Navratil’s hill’ they hitched up the team of horses and took the sleigh. The Kadlec family’s milk cans were identified by the number 21.

Wallace Oliva (son of Ed and Blanche), Silver Lake High School class of 1944, whose father worked as butcher at Lowy’s grocery store (now the Jerabek market)--recalls walking with his terrier named Terry (when the latter wasn’t catching muskrats on the dried-up shores of Silver Lake) up to the creamery to buy milk and bring it back for his family.

Melvin Wraspir (son of Edward and Matilda), Silver Lake High School class of 1943, whose father served on the creamery board in the 1940’s—recalls the annual picnic that the creamery members held at Swan Lake Pavilion and how the men would strike up a game of baseball and drink refreshments.

Delores (Witte) Gustafson, age 88, whose father was Henry Witte, recalls the time when he was butter maker at the Silver Lake Creamery in the 1930’s. Two locals, Frank Urban and George Stachowiak worked for him. She recalls that they sold their extra butter to the Glendenning company in New York State. She also remembered the potluck picnics at Swan Lake Pavilion as well as the time she spent with her Micka relatives, her uncle Bill Telecky, and visiting Rose Kadlec. Delores remarked that her father

always seemed to come home in a good mood after his day of working at the creamery. Since farmers would be paid in proportion to the content of the butterfat of the milk they delivered, she recalls her father's stories of those farmers who grew upset at the low prices they received--apparently because their wives had sneaked too much cream from the milk cans before they were brought into town! After the death of her father Henry, when she was about sixteen years old, Delores moved from Silver Lake to Minneapolis, to finish her schooling. For 43 years Delores worked as a cook in the cafeteria for school district #281 in Robbinsdale, Minnesota. In 1981, after Delores' mother, Elsie (Telecky) Witte, died at age 93, her family donated the funds to establish the drinking fountain for the Silver Lake softball field, which is located just to the north and west of the creamery building.

Here is a historical account from 1903 on how to set up an effective co-operative creamery:

Wisconsin Farmers' Institutes / *Wisconsin Farmers' Institutes: a hand-book of agriculture. A report of the seventeenth annual closing Farmers' Institute held at Marshfield March 17, 18, and 19, 1903*
Bulletin No. 17 (1903)

CO-OPERATIVE CREAMERIES

By E. A. CROMAN, Grass Lake, Mich.

"Let us first stop and see if we fully understand the term co-operative. Webster says it means "operating jointly to the same end." I believe there are very few, if any creameries that are, strictly speaking, co-operative. A creamery where they charge a fixed number of cents per pound for the manufacture of butter is not a cooperative creamery. A creamery where all patrons and stockholders share alike in the manufacture of the butter, in the profits and losses, and in operating expenses is a co-operative creamery. Are there any such? The nearest that any creamery company comes to being co-operative is one that is being operated on this plan; the running expenses,—by this I mean the pay for labor, coal, tubs, and all that goes into the cost of making and selling butter. One cent per pound is also added, which goes into a sinking fund. This is used to make repairs on the creamery and as a dividend. This plan has been in operation for the last ten years and has given the best of satisfaction. By this method all are served alike as near as may be. The patrons who are not stockholders, as well as those who are, pay the one cent per pound for the use of the creamery in addition to the cost of manufacturing one pound of butter. If we could have all patrons stockholders then we could have a cooperative creamery in every sense of the term. But let us do the best with what we have. If our methods of cooperating can be improved upon, let us do so at once; let us work in harmony. Co-operative dairying has come to stay. It has been tried and is successful.

The labor problem on the dairy farm is becoming a serious one; good and efficient help seems to be getting more scarce each year. It is, therefore, necessary that all practical methods for the saving of time and labor should receive our most earnest consideration. Can we better our methods of getting our product to the creamery? I believe the practice now in vogue of hauling the whole milk to the creamery and there having it separated, is losing a great many thousands of dollars to the dairymen each year. Not only is there loss in the cost of hauling the milk, but in the feeding value of the skimmed milk. Can we remedy this enormous expense, is the question. Yes, I believe we can by the use of a farm separator, either power or hand. I believe we can educate ourselves to take as good or better care of the cream thus separated than we can the whole milk. The cream thus separated upon the farm and delivered by the most up-to-date method will lessen the cost of manufacture at least one-half and with a great improvement over the present system as regards flavors, etc.

The Home Dairy.

I want to say a word here in regard to the man who believes in the home dairy. I have the greatest of respect for him, for I know only too well how much time, hard work, and attention it requires. We each have our own way of doing things. If the home dairyman can get a better price per pound for his butter, enough more than the creamery can pay him so that he gets well paid for his time, then he can afford to be a home dairyman. The plan of operating a co-operative creamery that I have mentioned is one of the best that I know of. In this method of operating it is of interest to every patron to see that his neighbor gets his milk to the creamery, as every pound more that goes to the creamery tomorrow than was got there today lessens the cost of manufacture just that much.

Handling of Milk for Creamery.

If you are a creamery patron be a good one. Start first by the selection of good, healthy cows. See to it that you have the proper food for your cows and that it is fed properly. Do not be a two or three cow patron. You will not be as well satisfied as regards results as you would be if you had ten, twenty, or more. Get your milk to the creamery in good condition. One ten gallon can of poor milk might spoil one thousand or more gallons of good milk. If you live a distance from the creamery your milk should be well aerated and then cooled. Here is where I have known of some bad mistakes. A can of milk cooled suddenly without being properly aerated contains all the animal odors. When this milk gets to the creamery and is again warmed up it will give off these odors and is liable to taint and spoil a great many gallons of good milk. No butter maker, no matter how well he understands his business, can make good butter out of tainted milk.

Selection of Officers for Co-operative Creamery.

I want to say a word in regard to the officers of this co-operative creamery. Great care should be taken in their selection. I believe that only stockholders who are patrons should hold office. They should be men who understand the care and feeding of the dairy cow and should be able to teach their patrons how to get their milk to the creamery in a proper way. I know | that this is almost impossible in starting a new creamery, but as soon as of-j fleers are found that are not capable they should be weeded- out and men put in office who will be a benefit j rather than a hindrance. A manager is the most important officer to be selected. He should be one who has the faculty of handling men. The books of the creamery should be open for the inspection of its patrons at all times. The men who haul the milk should get to and from the creamery as soon as possible. In summer the cans should be covered and kept cool en route to the creamery. In winter they should be covered and kept from freezing, as frozen milk does not make good butter, and- also the patron is not as liable to get a good test. Milk should never be hauled any distance in a wagon without springs, as the shaking of the milk often churns particles of cream into butter, thus rendering a good test impossible.”

Next Week: the first part of a 1903 discussion on what it takes to set up an effective local creamery... Do you have any historical info or memories of the Silver Lake Creamery? If so, please send it in and we'll share it in the February 3rd issue of the *Leader*.

If you have any contributions or suggestions for topics for future columns, please contact me by email: tkadlec@gmail.com or call me: (651) 271-0422 or send your letters to my attention: 1408 Fairmount Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105. See this article online at: www.kadlecovi.com Děkuji! Tony Kadlec