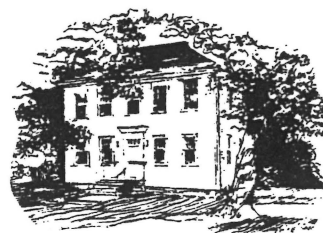


IMAGES

. . . then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society



**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

Dairy Farming on the Hill

Not long ago it was common practice for families to keep a cow in the backyard to provide milk, and those "on the Hill" who did not have a cow purchased milk products locally. In the early 1900's there were a number of commercial dairy farms on Indian Hill, including Breezy Hill, Shawnee Farm and Winding Creek.

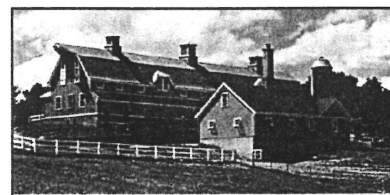
These commercial dairies were more sophisticated operations than the backyard cow concept, and had large barns, machinery, and careful monitoring of the herd. Both had Jersey cows, rotated the herd between pastures, replaced and repaired fences regularly, and grew corn to be saved in silos for winter feed. Clover or alfalfa hay was baled on site; fields were cultivated and fertilized; tractors, manure spreaders, and baling machines were kept in good working order. Each cow was impregnated annually, and the herd was managed – weaning calves, selling bulls, raising heifers.



Both dairies used glass milk bottles, with their names embossed; and the bottles were returned from customers and cleaned and sterilized at the farm between uses. The bottles and milk bottle caps (which had the farm name on them) are now collectible items. Some people believe that these glass bottles were preferable because they didn't affect the flavor of the milk like waxed cardboard or plastic.

The Breezy Hill Dairy Farm began when the widowed Mrs. George Eustis added cows to her herd to provide enough milk for her children. She imported her cows from the Isle of Jersey, Great Britain, and when more milk was produced than the family could consume, she started the dairy on south Drake Rd. Mrs. Eustis and her dairy managers worked closely with Ohio State University to modernize the 110-acre dairy operation. Her elaborate barn was the first to have an automatic milking machine in Ohio. Breezy Hill milk went straight to a refrigerated tank from the udder, after which it was bottled and capped. Milking occurred 3 times a day, and hired employees assisted with this and other chores. The farm became a training ground for college students majoring in agriculture and a meeting place for breeders from all over the country. It was a tourist destination, selected as a "sight to see" on Indian Hill in a 1943 Cincinnati guidebook. Breezy Hill cows were tested, monitored and shown, and won many awards, including one cow that twice was Grand Champion at the Ohio State Fair. Yearlings were sold by Mrs. Eustis to farms in New York, Georgia, and Cuba; and the sale of breeding stock at auction was quite lucrative.

Shawnee Farm, owned by James L. Chapman, was originally 100 acres and was a family operation run by father, mother, and three sons. Every day milking was done at 5:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. After each milking the barn was cleaned, and the 40 cows sent from the milk house out to pasture. One son delivered milk (and other dairy products) to customers in Indian Hill, Terrace Park and Milford. Customers on the route had a set order, and some got eggs from the farm's Plymouth Rock chickens. Sometimes dairy products were bartered for services from less fortunate customers. Mrs. Sidney (nee Conkling) Chapman kept the books and did the separating, pasteurizing and bottling of the milk and cream. An energetic woman, she was noted for her breads and pies and sold them to Cincinnatians who came out to the country on weekends. The Chapmans sold the summer surplus from their garden (butter beans, potatoes, tomatoes) to regular customers and weekenders. Since Shawnee Farm was a daily family operation, vacations were rare. When 40 acres of the farm was sold, Mr. and Mrs. Chapman took their first and only out-of-state holiday vacations – separately, so that one could stay on the farm.



State regulations and tax laws altered the status of Breezy Hill because the dairy was no longer considered a hobby but a business. Shawnee Farm had to cut production because World War II gas rationing limited the gas for the delivery truck. Two of the sons went to work in a war plant, and the Jersey herd was sold. In the 1940's both dairies closed.

Some of the relics of these two farms can be seen at Buckingham Lodge. Recent donations to the Historical Society include embossed glass milk bottles, a barrel for storage of cardboard bottle caps, and wooden delivery cases.