



**Jasper-Yellowhead
Museum & Archives**

Memories of Milner's Dairy

Imagine if you could get up in the morning and head over to your favourite grocery store to pick up a carton of fresh dairy milk, cream or butter that came from a Jasper Dairy farm. Today, of course, dairy farms are against Park policy

but over seventy years ago, in the mid twenties to early thirties, there was a small dairy farm in Jasper National Park. It was known as Milner's Dairy. The following reminisces were written by Elsie (Gauthier) Bailey of her early childhood spent at the Milner Dairy where her father worked as the barn manager. Elsie's cousin George also spent part of his childhood at the dairy as his father was also employed there. Elsie and George have generously shared her story and family pictures with the archives, in turn to be shared with the people of Jasper as a record of a forgotten time and perhaps a lost way of life:

Mrs. Mabel Milner was a real businesswoman, her husband, Charles Milner was a conductor on the railroad, and they lived in a log house at the Dairy along with Mrs. Milner's sister, Ruth Guthridge. Ruth had her own house on the Milner property and raised turkeys. Every fall Mrs. Milner bought the hay from a ranch at Drinnan (Hinton area). Mr. Milner owned the ranch and The Thorsens lived there and over saw the day-to-day operations. Mrs. Milner had her own truck and my dad, Marcel Gauthier, would haul the hay from Drinnan to Jasper. The Milners were real business people and Mr. Milner never interfered with his wife's Dairy nor she with her husband's hay operations. Mrs. Milner also kept a bull, in a pen, behind the barn. She also cultivated a large garden and sold her fresh produce to locals.

Mrs. Milner had several hired hands working for her. My uncle, Eugene Gauthier, delivered the milk and oversaw the bottling and handling. My dad, Marcel, was the barn boss. There was usually two or three hired men who helped milk the cows, as this was all done by hand and then the milk had to be strained and put in milk cans. The milk cans were placed in a cement trough that had ice cold water running through it at all times. This water came from the Cottonwood Creek and was piped to the dairy. Milk bottles had to be washed and sterilized and filled for the next day's delivery. Most times they had to separate some milk as a lot of people bought cream and the skim milk was fed to the turkeys.

The hired hands had to take turns at herding the cows everyday and in the summer the cows were pastured at Henry House Flats. They had corrals for them and they stayed there for the summer. There was always someone with them at all times. The cows were milked there and then the milk was transported back to the dairy for processing.

The men were always glad when fall finally arrived, as this made for a lot of extra work.

As long as I lived at the Milner Dairy, we were one big happy family. There was my Uncle Eugene Gauthier, his wife Marie and their children Margaret Marie and Maurice Gerrard (twins) and Eugene Jr., George, Marcel, and Charles. My immediate family was Marcel Gauthier (father), Helen (mother) and my brothers Warren and Gerald. The hired hands were Care Peterson, Hans Peterson, Thor ___?. These men were all from Denmark. I enjoyed my stay at the Dairy very much.

The dairy closed around 1946 when new Parks regulations regarding industry within the National Park and pasteurization regulations made it impossible to continue operating. However, there may still be a few Jasperites who still remember the old, green, Ford pickup that delivered milk every day in tall glass bottles with cream at the top and how on cold mornings the frozen cream would pop the tops off. If you have any recollections, or stories about the Milners, their dairy, or any other topics for that matter, I encourage you to write me a letter, send me an email or just stop by the Museum to chat, we always enjoy a good story.